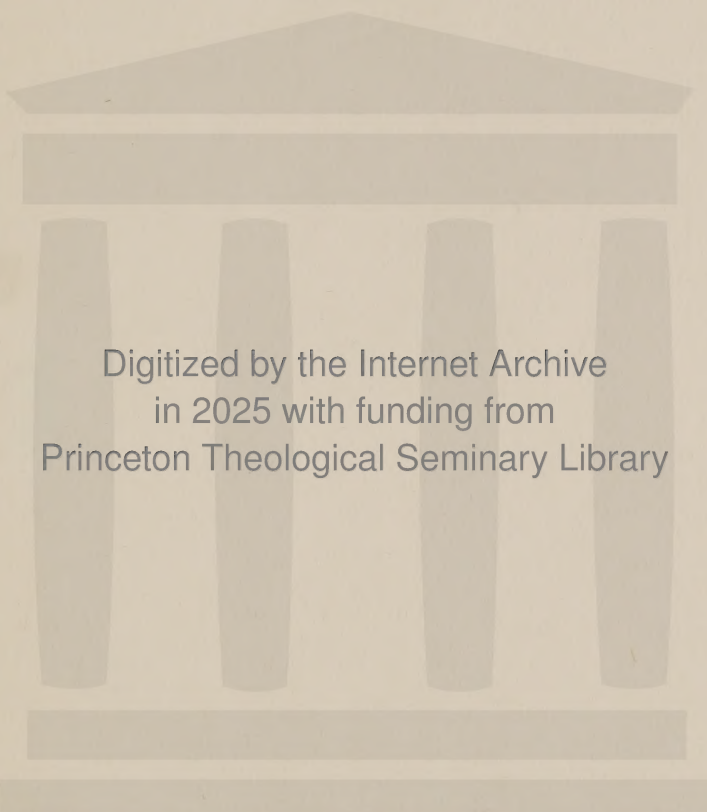


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HISTORY OF PROSTITUTION

AMONG ALL THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD, FROM
THE MOST REMOTE ANTIQUITY TO
THE PRESENT DAY

by

✓
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VOLUME TWO

COVICI • FRIEDE • PUBLISHERS
NEW YORK

CHAPTER XLVII

LOUIS IX had evidenced his candor and wisdom in endeavoring to suppress Prostitution in the realm of France. The ordinance of 1254, in which he decreed the wholesale banishment of women of an evil life, was never put into rigorous execution, for the reason that it could not be. In order to escape the severe prescriptions of the law, these wretched women merely practiced their despicable trade in secret, and assumed all sorts of masks in order to avoid recognition; they had recourse to all manner of ruses in order not to be taken in the act. Undoubtedly, their number diminished considerably, and debauchees encountered more obstacles in satisfying their shameful passions; but Prostitution nevertheless continued in the shadows, and it almost always succeeded in eluding the watch set by the bailiffs, provosts and judges. There no longer were, it is true, public places of debauchery, open at certain hours and under certain police rules; Prostitution was now everywhere hidden, since it no longer had the law on its side, and so, it kept up respectable appearances in cities and in individual houses, in place of being relegated to deserted quarters and infamous dens.* These creatures, who were so obstinate in disobeying the King's ordinance were the most vicious, the most corrupt and the most incorrigible of all his subjects. The necessity of dissimulating their derelictions obliged them, so to speak, to become still more perverted by putting on the cloak of hypocrisy and falsehood; they could no longer avoid suspicion except by affecting a decent exterior and adorning themselves with a feigned virtue; and so, they frequented the churches and were careful not to appear in the streets except with veils and with rosaries in their hands. A few, deprived of their source of income, entered religious communities under pretext of being repentant, and these did not contribute to the amelioration of convent manners.

But it soon became evident that legal Prostitution carried with it fewer inconveniences than that which was concealed and illicit. The conviction grew, also, that Prostitution could never be wiped out, and that to oblige it to assume all sorts of names and disguises was

**Translator's Note:—This is not infrequently used as an argument for the "segregated district."*

merely to lend it a fresh impetus. The professional libertines always knew where to find the means of indulging their scandalous habits; they knew the retreats of their accomplices, and they went to those retreats with impunity at all hours. They were not lacking, either, in a special instinct, which enabled them to distinguish among a thousand a woman who was in the habit of making a traffic of her body; but occasionally, they would pretend to have made a mistake, and would address themselves to decent women, who would flee with indignation at being the object of such insults. Young novices would insult more naïvely women whom they met without escorts, and whom they would pursue with indecent remarks. "It was then," says Delamare, in his *Traité de la Police*, "and for this reason that a change occurred for the first time upon this point of discipline. These unfortunate victims of Prostitution came to be treated with a certain toleration; but, at the same time, care was taken to distinguish them in public and, as it were, to point them out with the finger of scorn. Certain streets and places were designated as their dwellings, and the costumes which they were to wear and the hours which they were to keep were likewise designated." This passage from the *Traité de la Police* is very remarkable, in that it fixes a date for this establishment of a police of morals, since this date is not fixed by any contemporary witness, or by any royal or municipal ordinance; but the scholar Delamare might have searched our ancient jurisprudence, the records of Parliament, those of the Châtelet and those of the provosts of Paris, and he would not have come upon a single fact of this nature, if he had not had the proof under his eyes; it came probably from the statutes of the Corporation of *femmes folles de leur corps*, statutes which Sauval cites positively, and which were published at the period when every trade was careful about preserving its ancient privileges, being registered in the archives of the provost of Paris. We have, indeed, the ordinance of 1256 (not of 1254, as Delamare says), which reestablished the legal practice of Prostitution; but in this ordinance there is no question of streets and places assigned for the dwellings of public women, nor any prescription as to their habits, their costumes or their hours. Nevertheless, since it appears from subsequent ordinances that these various police details had been arranged with much precaution, it is altogether natural to attribute to St. Louis, or rather to Étienne Boileau, this régime, connected with that of the trades of Paris. Étienne Boileau was not named provost until 1258; but he enjoyed

long before the esteem of the King, who frequently sought his advice, and who, having selected him to reorganize the provost's office, frequently came to sit at his side when Boileau was dispensing justice at the Châtelet. "It was this wise provost of Paris," says Delamare, "who organized all the merchants and all the artisans into different bodies or communities under the title of *confrairies*, according to the commerce or the works which distinguished them; it was he who gave to these merchants their first disciplinary statutes. Is it not then, quite simple to understand the position of public women in this vast trade organization, in connection with which the legislator had devoted his attention to protecting the rights of each and to defining clearly the professions according to their traditional customs?"

Louis IX consented, then, to modify his ordinance of 1254; by adding to it a few words which did not alter it greatly at the first glance of the eye, he gave it a sense contrary to the one it had previously possessed; this was a roundabout manner of tolerating Prostitution. Following is the article which renders null and void that of the ordinance of 1254; "Item, that all light women and all common *ribaudes* shall be driven out of all our worthy towns and cities; especially, that they shall be driven out of our streets in the said cities and placed beyond the walls and far from the holy saints, as well as from the churches and cemeteries; and whoever shall rent any house whatsoever in any of the said worthy towns and cities to common and light women, or who shall receive them into his house, he shall render and pay to our establishments the rent of the house for a year." It is by virtue of this ordinance, dated from Paris, that legal Prostitution, which had disappeared for only two years, resumed its regular existence under the protection of the officers of the king; and all the ordinances which come after and which refer to Prostitution are founded upon this one of St. Louis, who, if he had not created, at least had reformed the morals police. The articles in the ordinance of 1256 preceding the one we have cited are not wholly alien to our subject, since they classify with the debauchees the gamblers at dice and the blasphemers, by assimilating Prostitution to dice-playing and blasphemy. The Saintly King, then, forbids his seneschals, bailiffs and other *officiaux et servicials*, of whatever state or condition they may be, to utter any word which may redound to the contempt of God, of the Virgin or of the Holy of Holies. "And they shall keep themselves," the ordinance adds, "from play at dice, from the *bordeaux*

and from the taverns." He forbids later the *forge des dez* throughout his realm, and orders that every man who shall have been found playing at dice, *commonly or by common report or frequenting a tavern or a bordel*, shall be reputed infamous, and shall not be permitted to testify at law. These articles of the code prove that, under his reign, the taverns were not possessed of any better a reputation than were the *bordeaux*; and we may form an idea from this of the sort of men and women who assembled in these dens of debauchery, which no one could enter without dishonor.

There is a reminder of the Roman law in the fact that the jurists had begun to study and to view with reprobation the taverns (*tabernae*), where one went to drink, to eat, to sleep and to gamble.* However, at the very moment when an ordinance of the King was declaring infamous whoever should have been convicted of frequenting these bad places, the provost of Paris was publishing the statutes of the tavern-keepers (*taverniers*) in which, it is true, he concerned himself only with the sale of wine at auction; but anyone who came along might be a tavern-keeper, provided he had the wherewithal (*de quoi*), and providing he paid in the proper revenues to the king and to the city; the corporation, which was thus composed of all sorts of persons, could not pretend to the esteem of respectable folk. These taverns were merely bound to serve wine *in loyal measure* (*à loial mesure*);** they might, otherwise, carry on the most indecent commerce, by opening their doors to *ribaudes* and to *ribauds*, who would pass the day in drunkenness, playing at dice, blaspheming and committing all sorts of culpable actions. During the short interval of time in which Prostitution had been constrained to hide itself, the taverns replaced the *bordeaux*, and the latter became taverns, when they were re-established by an ordinance of the King himself, who had closed them before taking account of their utility. Delamare assumes that it was during the interregnum of legal Prostitution that public women in our language began to be described by "particular and odious names which designated their ignominious debauchery." He appears to believe that these names had been invented expressly with the object

*Translator's Note:—Cf. Aretino, *I Ragionamenti*, Third Day ("The best Profession"): "On the day when a landlord opens a tavern without putting up a sign, it is understood that one goes there to eat, to gamble, to bawdy, to curse and to deceive, and that he goes away to say his prayers and to fast." Etc. (Putnam translation.)

**Translator's Note:—Cf. The modern bureau of weights and measures.

of inspiring horror and contempt for creatures who merited such insulting descriptions: "They undoubtedly had in view, by making them thus recognizable, the hope that modesty, which is so natural to their sex, would come to the aid of the law, and that men would be ashamed to be received in places and by creatures branded with so great an infamy."

We are reduced to conjectures on the subject of the organization of public women by Louis IX, or at least under the reign of this Saintly King; but is indubitable that this organization existed and that it was carried on under following reigns, without being modified in any radical manner; for it is always the ordinances of the Saintly Louis which are invoked by his successors in the regulation of legal Prostitution. We shall endeavor, in another chapter, to discover what were the streets of Paris which at this time were known as *bourdelières*. We have not found any historical text which proves that the women of evil life were from thereafter distinguished from respectable women, either by a mark of infamy like that of the Jews, or by vestments of a certain characteristic color. There is, however, ground enough for believing that Louis IX, who had desired that the Jews should not be confounded with the Christians, took the same precautions with regard to Prostitutes and obliged them to wear an analogous mark. It was in 1269 that the Jews, who were not permitted to remain in France except under conditions as onerous as they were dishonorable, were obliged, under pain of prison and arbitrary fine, to sew upon their robe in the front and back "a piece of felt or yellow cloth of one palm in diameter and four in circumference," which was called *rouelle* in French and *rota* or *rotella* in Latin.* Afterwards, this *rouelle* came to lose gradually its form and its dimensions; it became triangular and

**Translator's Note*—This mark of the Jew existed elsewhere than in France. See Are-tino's *La Cortigiana*,

Act IV, dialogue between Rosso and Romanello, the Jew:

Rosso. The last reason is, so you will not have to wear the red sign on your breast.

Jew. What difference does that make?

Rosso. It makes this difference, that the Spaniards would like to crucify you for that sign.

Jew. Why crucify me?

Rosso. Because it makes you look like one of them.

Jew. There's a difference between them and us.

Rosso. There is no difference if you wear that. And then, if you don't have the sign of a Jew, the urchins won't pelt you with orange peel and melons. And so, become a Christian. . . ." (Putnam translation.)

was called *billette*; when it came to be wholly suppressed, it was no longer any larger than a crown; but the Jews paid great sums into the treasury of Philip the Long in order to be delivered from this mark of infamy, which the poor ones among them alone retained down to the reign of King John, who reestablished the *rouelle*, half of red and half of white, of the size of the royal seal. Is it not to be presumed that the prostitutes were likewise constrained to bear a brand of the same sort? We shall prove that this brand was in use in a number of provinces in France. We shall, with still more probability, advance the theory that, from that day, the ordinances had forbidden dissolute women certain stuffs, certain furs, certain jewels. The first known ordinance in which there is question of a regulation of this sort, dates from the year 1360, and is to be found in the *Livre Vert Ancien du Châtelet*, containing the acts of the provost of Paris. In this ordinance, which is undoubtedly but the confirmation of one still more ancient, the provost of Paris forbids "to girls and women of evil life, and making sin of their bodies, to have the boldness to wear upon their robes and hoods any embroideries, boutonnières of silver, white or gilded, any pearls, or any mantles lined in gray, under pain of confiscation." It orders them to abandon these ornaments within a period of eight days, after which all the sergeants of the Châtelet who discovered any violations shall arrest the guilty parties, except in the places devoted to the service of God, and shall despoil them of the said articles, demanding five Parisian sous from each violator.

The provost of Paris, Étienne Boileau, carrying out the virtuous intentions of St. Louis, undoubtedly took upon himself the task of repressing all the excesses of Prostitution in the capital of the realm. His *Livre des Métiers*, in which he is principally concerned with the industrial constitution of each body of the State, does not afford us, it is true, any passage in which he poses as a reformer of morals; but the statutes of the corporations of arts and trades date back to this epoch, although they were not confirmed by the kings of France until much later, and we see in these statutes and privileges, drawn up by the old and wise men of each industry, that the policing of manners had been given the attention of the provost of Paris, who was the first to accord his official sanction to this law which the kings later approved and recognized by letters patent. In the statutes of the barbers, confirmed in 1371, masters of the trade are forbidden to keep women of an evil life in their houses or to aid the infamous trade of these

unfortunate ones, under pain of being deprived of their offices, and of losing at the same time, their implements (*outils*): chairs, basins, razors, and *other things belonging to the said trade*, which were to be sold for the profit of the king and the strongbox (*boite*) of the community. The barbers, who were frequently at the same time bathhouse-keepers and rubbers, did not always observe this prohibition, and the benefits they derived from Prostitution and *maquerelage* encouraged them to brave the pecuniary penalties, which it was necessary constantly to renew in the form of new ordinances. In the statutes of the butchers of Paris, confirmed in 1381, the apprentices of the trade are forbidden to marry a woman who had been or still was a *fille publique*: "Item, if anyone takes a woman commonly defamed, without leave of the master and the judges, he shall be deprived of the *Grant Boucherie* forever, and shall not be permitted to carve, either for himself or for another, without losing his meats; he shall carve in one of the stalls of the Petit-Pont till the master or the judges shall bail him." Finally, according to the statutes of the seamstresses, women defamed by their evil manners could not be received into the corporation, and those of the sort who had succeeded in being admitted by fraud or otherwise were to be expelled, following an inquiry; to mark their ignominious expulsion, Sauval (Volume II, page 147) says that the merchandise which these indecent ones had touched was tossed into the street.

All the efforts of St. Louis and his ministers to impose upon Prostitution a salutary restraint do not appear to have had the success which had been expected of them; for the pious King, at the end of his life, repented of having permitted vice a restrained career under the protection of the laws, and went back to his first plan, that of utterly effacing Prostitution in his States. When he was preparing to embark on the second Crusade, in the course of which he died, the horror he had of public indecency inspired him to put into execution this great plan of reform. The 25th of June, 1269, he wrote from Aigues-Mortes to Mathieu, Abbot of Saint-Denis, and to the Count Simon de Nesle: "We have ordered, moreover, the destruction at once of notable and manifest Prostitution (*notoria et manifesta prostitula*) which defile with their infamy our faithful people, and which draw so many victims into the gulf of perdition. We have ordered that these scandals be pursued in the cities, as well as in the country, and that our realm be absolutely purged (*terram nostram plenius expurgari*)

of all debauched men and all public malefactors (*flagitiosis hominibus ac malefactoribus publicis*).” This letter contains a positive order, the execution of which the death of the King did not permit. Despicable women and their contemptible hangers-on continued to practice their trade by virtue of preceding ordinances, and the well-meant designs of Louis IX were not carried out; and the Saintly King, the truth is, would only have run aground once more in his plan of purifying public manners. We may suppose, however, that he handed down to his sons the desire to attempt this reform, which he never had the time to carry out, for he seems to be alluding to them in the *Enseignements* written with his own hand, which he left on his deathbed to Philip, his elder son and his successor: “Keep yourself from doing anything which is displeasing to God,” he says in this moral testament, “that is to say, from any mortal sin. . . . Preserve the good customs of your realm. . . . Flee and avoid the company of the evil. . . . Love your neighbor and his good, and hate all evil of any sort whatsoever. Let none be so bold in your presence as to utter a word that is an occasion to sin.” Philip the Bold was animated by the desire to conform to the instructions of his glorious father.

At the Parliament of the Ascension, in 1272, this King enacted a prohibitive ordinance against blasphemy, places of debauchery and games of dice, which St. Louis likewise had included in his reprobation. We possess nothing more than the letter addressed to all the bailiffs in order “that they shall see to it in their bailiwicks and in the land that the barons observe the said ordinance by refraining from villainous oaths, common *bordeaux* and games of dice; the pecuniary penalty,” the King went on, “shall be changed into a corporal penalty according to the quality of the person and the extent of the misdeed.” The loss of the ordinance which this letter refers to is evidenced, it seems to us, by the fact that that ordinance was never executed, but was forgotten, perhaps before Philip the Handsome had succeeded Philip the Bold. This general extermination of the brothels was an impossible and a dangerous thing; the same tacit tolerance was to be preferred which had spared them in the past and which had placed no obstacle in the path of their multiplication. It is to be believed that, in those times, they limited themselves to subjecting Prostitution to severe police rules, and to assuring thus the safety of good women. We shall assign, then, to the reign of Philip the Bold two customs which Pasquier reports in his *Recherches de la France*, without

assigning them a precise date, merely placing them about the time of St. Louis. It was very likely at this period that prostitutes were forbidden to wear gilded girdles, being ordered, on the other hand, not to show themselves in public without an aglet upon the shoulder. This aglet must have varied in color according to the cities in which a *ribaude commune* possessed the right of sojourning and of practicing her trade. We shall see, in speaking of the usages and customs of Prostitution in the different cities of France, that the public women of Toulouse had, in place of the aglet on the shoulder, an *enseigne* or *jarretière* on the arm, and that this *enseigne* was always of a different color from the robe, in order the better to catch the glance and proclaim the vile condition of the person who wore it. "The successors of this wise King (Louis IX)," says Pasquier, in Chapter XXXV, Book VIII of his work, "did not by their laws and edicts permit brothels although they suffered them through a form of connivance; thinking that of two evils it was better to choose the less, and that it was more expedient to tolerate public women than to give occasion to knaves to solicit married women, whose duty it was to make an express profession of their chastity. True, they desired that these women who in public places abandoned themselves to the first comer should not only be reputed infamous by law, but that they should also be distinct and separate in the matter of habiliments from the virtuous matrons (*sages matrones*); which is the reason they were of old forbidden in France to wear *gilded girdles* (*ceintures dorées*); and for this same reason, it was formerly desired that such ladies should have some signal upon their person, that they might be distinguished and recognized from the other, modest women (*preudes femmes*); and this signal was the wearing of an aglet upon the shoulders."

It is with two old customs that Pasquier connects two proverbs that were popular in the thirteenth century, and which are not yet so old that they have ceased to be employed in our own century. One said, and one says still, that a woman wears the aglet, and that good renown is better than a gilded girdle. It was, as a matter of fact, under the reigns of Philip the Bold and Philip the Handsome, that fashion imported into France from the Orient those leather girdles, gilded or woven in gold, which the ordinances forbade women of low condition, and, as a consequence, the *ribaudes*, who, like the *meretrices* of Rome, were not permitted to wear gold or silver upon their persons;

the forbidding of an object of the toilet must have been intolerable to the bourgeoisie and trades women, who found themselves thereby, classified with the *folles femmes*; they proceeded to avenge themselves for the prohibitive edict by contrasting their good renown to the luxurious habits of the ladies of the court, who did not always, by any means, lead an irreproachable life. There were frequent infractions of the ordinance, and many women adorned themselves with these gilded girdles, which they did not have the right to wear. The Provost of Paris did his best by threatening them with fines and confiscation, but they were obstinate in defying the sergeants and in playing the part of ladies. The *ribaudes* were not any the less bold in taking this prohibited ornament on account of the risks of prison or the lash. It will not be necessary for us to refute those writers who, without reason, have held that the gilded girdle was attributed as a distinctive mark to women of evil life, and that respectable women, who did not dare confuse themselves with these others by borrowing from them this compromising ornament, consoled themselves haughtily for their deprivation by insisting upon their own good reputation. As to the aglet, it does not figure long on the shoulders of the prostitutes of Paris, although Pasquier saw it with his own eyes toward the end of the sixteenth century, when this custom was practiced at Toulouse by the pensionnaires of the Châtel-Vert. *Courir l'aiguillette* signifies, according to Pasquier, "to prostitute one's body by abandoning it to everyone." It is probable that this phrase at first had been used to designate women who ran about the streets with the aglet (*aiguillette*) upon the shoulder. This picturesque expression was not slow in becoming disfigured, on account of the lack of knowledge of the circumstance to which it owed its birth; the people had corrupted it without being aware of the fact, and without altering the primitive sense, when they formed the habit of saying *courir le guilledou*. We shall not seek to convict of error certain philologists who have endeavored to show that the *ribaudes* who ran the aglet addressed themselves especially to the shoulder-strap of those whom they accosted, these shoulder-straps being attached and held in place by a lace or aglet. These philologists have committed an anachronism in the archaeology of shoulder-straps, and they have been led astray by the unfortunate comparison which they have made of two varieties of aglets.

However this may be, under the successors of St. Louis, Prostitution, however well regulated it may have been, impudently enlarged

its domain; and manners had become so relaxed that the three daughters-in-law of Philip the Handsome, Marguerite, Queen of Navarre, Jeanne, Countess of Poitiers, and Blanche, Countess of La Marche, were accused of adultery at one and the same time and immured, by order of the King, in the same prison in the Château-Gaillard. Their trial was held behind closed doors, and nothing of the prodigious excesses attributed to them became public; one of them, Jeanne de Bourgogne, wife of Philip, Count of Poitiers, was merely transferred to the Château de Dourdan, where her husband went to seek her, with the object of returning her liberty if not her honor. Marguerite, although less guilty than her sisters, was strangled to death in her prison, and Blanche only left hers to see herself repudiated and led away to the convent of Maubuisson. Public opinion attributed to these three sisters a monstrous complicity in debauchery and crime; it was told of them that they had deliberately taken up their lodgings in the *hôtel de Nesle*, situated beyond the walls of Paris on the banks of the Seine, on the present site of the *Institut de France*, and that they were in the habit of attracting to this house, which belonged to Jeanne, Countess of Poitiers, the young *écoliers* whom they had picked out from among those who frequented the Pré-aux-Clercs. These scholars, after having satisfied the lubricity of the three Princesses, were poisoned or slain with a dagger and afterward hurled into the river, which thus provided a watery sepulchre for the sorry victims of the *Tour de Nesle*. Two officers of the household of these Princesses, Philip and Gautier de Laumay, brothers, were convicted at Pontoise in 1314 and condemned to be flayed alive, which was done, and their bodies remained exposed upon the gibbet, like those of the vilest criminals. A similarity of names involves for a moment in this accusation the Queen herself; but Jeanne de Navarre, who had never inhabited the *hôtel de Nesle*, found little difficulty in clearing herself with the judges. The shameful depravity of these daughters-in-law was none the less reflected upon her; and a tradition, perpetuated among the people, would make her the bloody heroine of the debauches of the *hôtel de Nesle*. "According to this erroneous tradition," says Robert Gaguin, in his *Compendium* of the history of France, "this Queen had shared her couch with a number of scholars (*aliquot scholasticorum concupitu usam*) and to hide her crime, after having slain them, she hurled herself from the window of her room into the river. A single one of the young scholars, Jean Buridan, escaped this ambus-

cade, and it was for this reason that he published this sophism: *Reginam interficere nolite, timere bonum est.*" This celebrated sophism, which may be understood and explained in a number of fashions, is an enigma not unworthy of the famous Jean Buridan, whom the University of Paris cites with honor among its professors of philosophy in the fourteenth century. This latter, who was rector of the University in 1320 (see *Bibl. belg.* of Valère André, page 471), would have been but a simple *écolier* six or seven years before. As to the sophism of which he was the author, we believe that we can reestablish its original sense by writing it thus: *Reginam interfodere nolite, timere, bonum est.* We would put in the place of the verb, *interficere*, which has no sense here, *interfodere*, *interferire*, *interferre*, or any other verb possessing an erotic significance, and we would translate it thus: "Do not sleep with the Queen; it is well to fear this dangerous honor."

The tradition attaching to the tower of Nesle, which has come down from the end of the seventeenth century, was so widespread among the people of Paris that Brantôme makes mention of it in his *Dames Galantes*.

"This Queen," he says, "resided in the *hôtel de Nesle* at Paris and there laid a snare for passers-by, and those who were the most agreeable to her, of whatever sort they might be, she called to and summoned them and, after having taken from them what she would, she caused them to be hurled from the top of the tower into the water below and thus caused them to be drowned. I would not say that this is true, but the vulgar, at least the majority in Paris, affirm it; and it is so common that they repeat it in pointing out the tower." Before Brantôme, Villon had also recalled this tragic story, by saying, in his *Ballade des dames du temps jadis*:

*Sembeablement où est la reine
Qui commanda que Buridan
Fût jeté en un sac en Seine!**

But the historical legend has become singularly weakened, and in place of the three libertine Princesses, disputing and sharing the caresses of robust and handsome scholars and finding new ones every night, we see, in the vulgar narrative, only a Queen of France enam-

**Translator's Note*:—"And likewise, where is the queen who ordered that Buridan be cast, in a bag, into the Seine."

oured of Buridan. Let us remark, also, that this Buridan might have been alluding to his adventure in the tower of Nesle by inventing an allegory which became proverbial and which was called *l'âne de Buridan*; it represented an ass preferring to die of hunger between two bushels of oats, rather than choose between the two. May not this ass have been Buridan himself between two or three princesses, equally beautiful and equally impatient in their desire for pleasure?

For the rest, if the women, if princesses themselves showed themselves so eager to run after men, it was perhaps because the men appeared to disdain them and had found interests elsewhere. A horrible libertinism had crept into all classes of society since the Crusades, and vice against nature, which the sojourn of the French in Palestine had caused to be acclimated in France, was still threatening despite the efforts of Knighthood, to infect manners and corrupt the population. We have quoted elsewhere a passage from the *Histoire Occidentale* of Jacques de Vitry, which gives us a frightful picture of the perversity of his contemporaries. A French poet of the same epoch, Gautier de Coincy, although prior of the Abbey of Saint-Medard de Soissons, pictures the life of the cloister under colors equally shameful in his *Fabliau de Sainte Leocade*:

*La Grammaire hic a hic accouple;
Mais Nature maldit le couple.
Le mort perpétuel engendre
C'il qui aime masculin genre
Plus que le féminin ne face,
Et Diex de son livre l'efface;
Nature rit, si comme moi semble,
Quand hic et hoc joignent ensemble.
Mais hic et hic, chose est perdue,
Nature en est tost esperdue. . . .**

This abominable vice had become so common that legal Prostitution deserved to be encouraged as a remedy or at least as a palliative

**Translator's Note:—*The Grammar joins *hic* with *hic*; but Nature curses such a union. He who loves the masculine sex more than he does the feminine is begetting eternal death for himself, and God wipes him from his book. Nature, as I see it, smiles when *hic* and *hoc* are joined together. But *hic* and *hic* means damnation, and Nature stands aghast. . . ."

for such a turpitude. The very existence of society must have appeared to be at stake, when Philip the Handsome, who was lacking in neither resolution nor energy, proposed to arrest the progress of sodomy by striking terror in those who set the example for this criminal aberration of the senses: this was a principal cause of the trial of the Templars. The attentive perusal of authentic fragments of the records of this trial proves to us that Philip the Handsome was merely prosecuting, under the guise of this religious and military order, sacrilege and debauchery which had been carried to the last degree of scandalous audacity. "Whatever opinion one may adopt as to the rule of the Templars and the primitive innocence of the order," says the illustrious historian Michelet, frightened at the imposing evidence which he had brought to life for the first time, and which merely seems to confirm our opinion, "it is not difficult to form a judgment as to later excesses, excesses analogous to those of the religious orders." The publication of original documents proves, in an irrefutable manner, that the order of the Temple had become utterly corrupted by the most execrable depravity. Philip the Handsome, in accord with Pope Boniface VIII, had the courage to attack the evil at the root, and to attempt to stifle it under the débris of the order of the Temple, which had propagated it under a stainless mantle. There is a chronicle which imputes to the vengeance of a woman the defamatory accusation which was made against the Templars in 1307, and which soon kindled pyres throughout all Europe. The interrogatory which the grand master and two-hundred-thirty-one knights or servant-brothers underwent at Paris in the presence of the pontifical commissaries "was conducted gently," says Michelet, "and with much tact by the high ecclesiastical dignitaries, and despite the systematic denials of the accused, it was established that the majority of the charges relating to the indecent manners of the order were but too well justified. The hurried nature of the punishment inflicted upon the condemned proves clearly enough the nature of the crime, which public rumor for long had attributed to them, before a minute inquiry had brought out the ignominy."

The Templars were universally depraved; and their principal vices, their pride, their avarice, their ambition, their drunkenness and their meanness had passed into a proverb; but if one said, among the people: to drink, to swear, and to play the glutton like a Templar (*boire, jurer, se gorgiaser comme un Templier*); if the satiric poets took pleasure

in excoriating these soldier-monks, there was still a general ignorance of the monstrous infamies practiced in the bosom of the order of the Temple, which had become an odious sect devoted to the most ignoble form of prostitution. After the deposition of the first witnesses who had spontaneously presented themselves to accuse the Templars, a series of questions was drawn up and put separately to each of the accused, and from their responses, more or less evasive, it might be concluded with certitude that, in the ceremony of the reception of brothers, the one who was received and the one who did the receiving kissed each other mutually upon the mouth, upon the navel or the belly, on the anus or the base of the spine, and sometimes on the virile member (*aliquando in virga virili*); that the new member was ordinarily submitted to impure kisses of this sort, after having denied Jesus Christ and after having spat upon the Cross; that his sponsor forbade him to have relations with women, but authorized him to abandon himself with the brothers to the most horrible excesses. A large number of the Templars, faithful to their mutual oaths, joined in a haughty protest against what they labeled as ridiculous calumnies. A number of them, intimidated or won over, promptly made circumstantial confessions, while the others contented themselves by declaring that they had never participated in any reprehensible act, even while admitting the obscenities which had marked their reception by the knights, in accordance with the statutes of the order. Moreover, these statutes were not explained by anyone, and no attempt was even made to justify their strange and mysterious horrors. Huguet de Paris relates that, during the ceremony of his reception, after he had been deprived of his garments, excepting his shirt, the brother charged with his reception, after having assisted him in putting on the robe and mantle of the order, lifted up his clothes from the front and from the rear (*frater P. levavit ipsi testi vestes ante et retro*) and kissed him brusquely on the mouth, on the navel and at the bottom of the loins. Mathieu de Tilley says, on the contrary, that the brother who received him, after having made him deny Christ and spit upon the Cross, ordered that he kiss him on the naked flesh, and for this purpose uncovered his rump, to which the neophite applied his lips (*praecepit quod oscularetur eum in carne nuda, et discoperuit se circa femur, et ipse fuit osculatus eum in anca circa illum*). The deposition of Gérard de Causse was not less circumstantial, although it contained an obvious contradiction. Thus, according to his story, every knight of the

Temple who became guilty of sodomy (*si essent convicti de crimine sodomitico*) was condemned to perpetual imprisonment, and the brothers, fearing the temptations of the Devil on this score, were accordingly in the habit of leaving the light burning in their dormitories during the night (*et quod tenerent lumen de nocte in loco in quo jacerent, ne hostis inimicus daret eis occasionem delinquendi*); and yet, when Gérard de Causse had been received as a knight, one of the brothers had told him that, in case he was unable to resist the temptations of carnal desire, it would be better for the honor of the Order to sin with his companions than to approach women (*dixit eis quod se haberent calorem et motus carnales, poterant ad invicem carnaliter commisceri, si volebant quia melius erat quod hoc facerent inter se, ne ordo vituperaretur, quam se accederent ad mulieres*). This Templar did not fail to protest, like the others, that he had never seen this infamous precept put into practice, or known of its being put into practice, by his brothers.

The consequences of this trial were terrible; a host of Templars perished as a result. The order of the Temple, abolished and anathematized, did not, however, disappear all at once, but was secretly continued, while its members displayed the same morals, if we are to credit certain statements which do not possess the value of historic proof. But after having read and compared the fragments of this memorable trial, which shows us a sect of sodomites and impious lechers, covered by the religious habit and giving themselves in the presence of the Altar, to execrable excesses—after this, we are forced to seek the causes which led to the corruption of this Order, an Order which had been for long respected by reason of its regular manners and its virtues. These causes are to be found in the long sojourn of the Templars in the Orient, where vice against nature is almost endemic, and where the fear of leprosy, of the *mal des ardents* and various cutaneous or organic affections is always attached to relation with women. The Templars, from fear of becoming lepers and *méseaux*, had defiled body and soul by accepting and approving the most shameful of all forms of Prostitution.

CHAPTER XLVIII

WE HAVE very little information as to the history of the bad houses of Paris, and it is with difficulty that we are able to establish in a positive manner their exact location at certain periods prior to the sixteenth century. However, from the end of the thirteenth century, we find them named in the public acts (*instrumenta*) of the provost's office, in the cartularies of parishes and convents, in the court-rolls, in the *comptes* of various jurisdictions and even in the old poems. It is, then, permissible for us, with the aid of these authorities, to endeavor to determine, so to speak, the topography of Parisian Prostitution in the middle ages. Unfortunately, in endeavoring to trace with difficulty the *carte routière* of the infamous streets of the Capital, we are confronted with the impossibility of supplying certain picturesque and curious details which would be very desirable, and amusing for the reader, amid the monotonous dissertations of the antiquarian. These details are absolutely lacking, and if we happen to know what streets and by-ways at that time possessed the sorry character which a number of them have retained to our day, we do not know anything as to the external aspect of these places of debauchery, what were their names and signs, at least so far as the majority are concerned, what was their customary internal organization, or what they looked like on the inside. Everything here lies in the domain of the imagination, which finds it necessary to seek in Rabelais and even in Regnier the colors appropriate to a picture of the *bordeaux* of our ancestors. But nevertheless, although we have but very vague and very imperfect notions on this mysterious subject, we believe it will be useful and interesting to compile an archaeological inventory of these resorts, which we shall see gradually spreading out from the center of the city, and which appear to have been the fiefs of Dame Venus and her son Cupid, whom France in the Middle Ages still endowed with mythologic reminiscences.

In those privileged and traditional times, each trade possessed certain quarters and certain streets to which it gave its name; in this street were the *ouvroirs*, the *fenêtres*, the *étaux* of the masters of this trade; the industry in question was centered there. Prostitution, which was one of these trades, was unable to confine itself to a single

quarter or to occupy certain streets running into each other; for it was essentially to its interest to divide its forces and to spread out in all the quarters at once, in order to spread everywhere its nets and to capture as many victims as possible. The police who regulated it were always opposed to this diffusion of debauchery in all parts of the city, and labored constantly to restrict the territory conceded to public women. Such is the struggle which we witness for a number of centuries, on the part of Prostitution, which held up its head in turn against the authority of the Archbishop of Paris, that of the provost, that of Parliament, and even that of the king. Its obstinacy and audacity resisted ordinances, decrees and sergeants; it would not yield, except after a long warfare, a locality that it fancied, and which had been accorded to it by tradition; it would come back incessantly, after having been driven out, and it would never entirely abandon the place; it was not hard to please, otherwise, as to the choice of place in which it set up business; it did itself justice in adopting by preference the gloomiest, the narrowest, the dirtiest and most infected streets, a habit which it still preserves, as though it did not dare to leave its hiding-place and as though the air that decent folks breathed were unhealthy for it. Like the Jews, who did not have the right to set foot out of their own quarter, and who were shut up at night like lepers in lazarethouses, the *ribaudes* and their infamous following did not go beyond the limits of their own locality under pain of being exposed to the lash, to prison or to a fine; but after their legal existence had been regulated by the ordinances of St. Louis, they no longer had need of concealment in the practice of their obscene profession, providing they conformed to the prescriptions and the statutes of ribaldry (*la ribaude*.)

The oldest document in which we find a nomenclature of the bad places of Paris is a poem or monologue in verse, composed in the thirteenth century by a certain Guillot, who is only known to us by his *Dit des Rues de Paris*. This poem was published for the first time in 1754 by the Abbé Lebeuf, from a manuscript which he had discovered at Dijon, and which he deposited in the library of the Abbé Fleury, Canon of Notre-Dame. Since that time, the work of Guillot has been often reprinted, and it has been made use of in particular in fixing the Parisian topography of the thirteenth century; for it is from 1270 that we may date this rhymed catalogue in which the *acteur* speaks of *Dom Sequence*, *chefecier de Saint-Merry*, as of a con-

temporary; this latter personage was still living in 1283. Critics, who have cited the *Dit des Rues*—to which Guillot has given the form of an itinerary, commencing with the rue de la Huchette, in the quartier de l'Université—have failed to observe that the poet, or rather the rhymmer, in accumulating the names of streets and alleys, which he delights in rhyming together in the most naïve manner in the world, would appear to have no other end in view than the designation of places devoted to debauchery. We would not say that this honest Guillot, who has perhaps seen his name pass into a proverb, with the epithet, *sonneur*, had any immoral object in view; but it is, nevertheless, a remarkable fact that, in these three hundred rhymes, the principle digressions of the poet relate to Prostitution; on this score, at least, he relaxes from the aridity of an onomastic catalogue, and throws in complacently a few figures of speech which are not in the best of taste. Each time Guillot meets with one of those *capliers* which the urban police surrounded with a mysterious tolerance, he has the air of pausing, if only to mark the place, and indicate its existence. Since he designates more than twenty suspect streets in the three great divisions of Paris, included under the denominations of the *Université*, *Cité* and the *Ville*, there is ground for supposing that he was given the name of *Guillot le Sonneur* by the *borderlières*, who thereby reproached him with having mentioned *bordeaux*, which existed only in his imagination.

The first street to be recognized in his passage from the Petit-Pont to the quartier de l'Université, is in the rue de la *Plâtrière*, which appears to have been the street later called the rue de Battoir:

*La maint (demeure) une dame loudière
Qui maint chapel a fait de feuille.**

The Abbé Lebeuf, undoubtedly inspired by modesty, explains the word *loudière* as *faiseuse de couvertures* (a woman who makes blankets); but in the old French tongue, *loudière*, signifying a blanket itself, was figuratively equivalent to *prostitute*. This *loudière* may well, in the leisure permitted her by her vile trade, have occupied herself with the making of those *chapeaux de fleurs* or *de verdure*, which the brothers of the corporations bore at their patron's festival, in proces-

**Translator's Note*:—"There dwells many an old blanket of a dame who has plaited many a straw hat."

sions and in various solemn rites. We are not far from believing that these *chapels*, the making of which constituted an industry of sufficient importance at Paris, were worn upon the heads of fiancées, of brides and of lovers, at the family meals. Guillot does not stop long with the rue de la Plâtrière, whatever may have been the charms of its ladies; he pursues his way, he tells us, by the rue de Paon, which he calls *Puon*:

*Je descendî tout bellement
Droît à la rue des Cordèles:
Dame ia: le descord d'elles
Ne voudroie avoir nullement.**

This rue des Cordèles is now the rue des Cordelières, which owes its name to the convent of the Grands-Cordelières, destroyed by the Revolution. It is probable that Guillot has replaced *Cordelières* by *Cordèles* for the sake of the rhyme, and also by allusion to affairs of the heart which took place in that street. The *dames* who dwelt there were undoubtedly not of a courteous and facile disposition, since the poet fears nothing so much as having an argument (*descord*) with them. This alludes to the fact that, in all ages women of pleasure have been very prompt in dispute and very violent in their wrath. Guillot, in order to meet other women of the same sort, is obliged to go as far as the rue des Prêtres-Saint-Severin, which he calls the *petite ruellette de Saint-Sevrin*, where

*. . . Mainte meschinete
S'y louent souvent et menu,
Et fond batre le trou velu
Des fesseriaux, que nus ne die.*

We shall not undertake the task of removing the veils which the old language throws about the scandalous trail of the *meschinetes* whom Guillot introduces to us with much indulgence. We shall rather follow him into the rue de l'Hôpital which has since been named the rue Saint-Jean-de-Latrain, in memory of the Hospitalers of St. John of Jerusalem, who had a house there. Guillot lands in the middle of

*Translator's Note:—"I went merrily along, making straight for the rue des Cordèles; there were some ladies there with whom I did not care to have any argument."

a lot of quarreling women, who are engaged in insulting and beating one another in the street, despite the proximity of the holy fathers; the text is here less obscure than corrupt:

*Une femme i d'espital (despita),
Une autre femme folement
De sa parole moult vilment. . . .**

Guillot fled, without awaiting the end of the dispute, and he so strongly feared becoming involved in it that, to escape, he crossed the rue Saint-Syphorien, today the rue des Cholets, where he knew a girl named Marie, who must have been at once an Egyptian (a caster of horoscopes) and a *loudière*;

*La rue de la Chaveterie
Trouway. N'allay pas chez Marie,
En la rue Saint-Syphorien,
Où maignent li logiptien.***

In passing into the rue Saint-Hilaire, which has preserved its name, he remembers that a *dame débonnaire* dwells there, but he does not have the time to make a stop in the house of this lady of good will (*de bonne volonté*), whom he names *Gietedas*, a soubriquet in which it would be easy to discover an obscene sense; and now he is in the *clos* Bruneau (*Burniau*)—*on l'on a rosti naint brulau*, he says; but by *Bruliau*, he certainly does not mean to speak of the faggots which were burned there. The *clos* Bruneau was in the center of the schools, and the scholars who, in the time of Rabelais, went there to deposit their ordures, also repaired there to *faire chere-lie* with their *meschines*. Guillot has, then, reason to remark that *on à rôti maint bruliau* in this sombre and infected retreat. We still say, in the same sense, *rotir le balai*. Nearby was the rue des Noyers, where were to be found as many women of an evil life as may be met with in our day in the whole quarter:

**Translator's Note:*—"One woman was in a fury, and another, like mad, with her vile mouth. . . ."

***Translator's Note:*—"I found the rue de la Chaveterie; but I did not go to Marie's in the rue Saint-Syphorien where the Egyptians live."

*Et puis la rue du Noyer,
Où plusieurs dames, por louier
Font souvent battre leurs cartiers.**

Guillot, in the rue du Bon-Puits, which owes its name to a jovial allusion, does not forget to commemorate the high deeds of a god-mother, wife of a carpenter, famous for the number of men whom she had sent from her bed to the cemetery, according to an interpretation based upon these two verses:

*La maint la femme à un chapuis
Qui de maint homme a fait ses glais.*

Leduchat, or Lenglet Dufresnoy, in explaining the second verse, sees in it an undoubted erotic figure borrowed from the sound of the bells when tolled for the dead. Guillot, who knew all the good places, as one remarked in the familiar language of the last century, heaved a sigh in crossing the rue de l'Ecole, *where dwells dame Nicole*. This rue de l'Ecole, which has become the rue des Fouarre,** on account of the straw or *feurre* which was spread in it to deaden the sound of footsteps, contained the great Schools of the University, and, at the same time, more than one school of prostitution. This is why Guillot remarks with malice:

*En celle rue, ce me semble,
Vent-on et fain et feurre ensemble.****

Guillot has nothing more to learn in these schools; he makes his

**Translator's Note*:—"And then, the rue de Noyer (Walnut Street), where plenty of ladies for hire often have their bums well thumped."

***Translator's Note*:—"This was a famous street. In this street, in the Middle Ages, were the lecture-halls of the Faculty of Arts. Dante speaks of this street in his *Paradiso*, X., 136-38 ("*vico degli strami*"). "It drew its name," says M. Jean Plattard, "from the straw (*feurre*) on which the students formerly sat." See Rabelais, Book Second, Chapter X. It was in the rue de Fouarre that Pantagruel "held forth against all the regents, liberal-arts-students and orators and set them all on their behinds." Urquhart's "Fodder-street." The street and the name are still in existence.

****Translator's Note*:—"In this street, it seems to me, they sell hay and straw together."

escape by the rue Saint-Julien-le-Pauvre, and he invokes this Saint, *who keeps us from bad places*. Saint Julien was the protector of travellers; he guaranteed them against missteps and misencounters. Guillot, then, enters safe and sound the Cité, and the first street he finds arouses his concupiscence; it is the rue Cocatrix:

*Où l'on boit souvent de bons vins
Dont maint homs souvent se va rie.**

There was not at this period a single wine-shop which was not a place of debauchery. Guillot mentions a *good tavern* in the rue Charoui, which extended then from the cloister of Notre-Dame to the rue des Trois-Canettes. These taverns and their dependencies were probably frequented by the choristers and doctors of the cathedral. Guillot, undoubtedly, does them justice in passing: let us hope for his own sake that he did no more than pass through the ruelle Saint-Croix, "where they frequently lash rumps, (*ou l'on chengle souvent des cois*)", and so into the rue Gervais-Laurent, which he calls *Gervese Laurens*,

*Ou maintes dames ignorent
Y mesnent, quis de leur guiterne.*

We do not deduce that the inhabitants of this ill-famed street were in the habit of attracting innocence with the sound of a guitar (*guiterne*). Since we are rather inclined to give the word *guiterne* a figurative sense, our modesty forbids our going into the possible meaning here. Nor shall we stop longer over a strange meeting which befalls Guillot in the rue des Marmousets, then *du Marmouset*, where a certain one addresses to him an infamous proposition:

*Trouvay homme qui m'eut fet
Une Musecorne belourde.*

In the rue du Chevet-Saint-Landry, Guillot is no longer dealing with any but debauched women, whose profession he defines in a manner that is a little hard to understand:

*Translator's Note:—"Where one finds good wine to drink, and many a man goes away merry."

*Femmes qui vont tout le chevez
Maignent en la rue de Chevez.*

Guillot plunges deeper and deeper into the traditional realm of Prostitution; he is now in Glatigny, which was called the Valley of Love (*val d'amour*):

*En bout de la rue descent
De Glatignî où bonne gent
Maignent et dames au cors gent
Qui aux hommes, si comme moy semblent,
Volontiers charnelment assemblent.**

He escapes, it may be, the perils of temptation and plunges into the rue du Haut-Moulin, which was called the rue Saint-Denis de la Chartre, on account of the church which was to be viewed in it, which was not destroyed until the time of the Revolution. The bad house which Guillot designates in this street must have been one of the most considerable in Paris, and the women it contained never left this lubricious abbey,

*Où plusieurs dames en grant chartre
Ont maint v. en leur c . . . tenu,
Comment qu'ilz y soient contenù.*

This passage and many others will tend to prove that the *Dit des Rues* might quite appropriately have been entitled *Dit des Bordeaux* of Paris. Guillot has finished with those of the Cité; he traverses the Grand-Pont-au-Change and continues his way into the Ville on his pornographic quest.

In the rue des Lavandières, "where there are many laundresses" (*ou il a maintes lavendières*), he gives us to understand that these women do not limit themselves to rinsing linen in the river. In all times, the *blanchisseuses* have had the same reputation, and the queen whom they elected each year possessed powers analogous to those of the *roi des ribauds*; but this was only in her own dominions and over

*Translator's Note:—"I went on down from Glatigny, where there are many fine folks and ladies with nice bodies who, it seems to me, are very fond of meeting men in carnal fashion."

her own subjects. Guillot does not linger over these joyous *ribaudes*; he pursues his route through the muddy streets of the quartier des Halles; to refresh himself, he enters for a moment a tavern of the *place aux Pourceaux*, which later became the *place aux Chats*, then the *fosse aux Chiens*, for the reason that they buried carrion and sewage there; it is the intersection formed by the rues Saint-Honoré, des Déchargeurs and de la Lingerie. Guillot, who here complains of a lack of satisfaction (*Guillot, qui point d'heur bon n'as*), says, however, that he has found his tracks (*sa trace*), his road or, rather, what he is seeking, the trail of some pretty *galloise*, with whom he can empty a pot of claret or of muscavet. In the rue Bethisy, he is not astonished at bumping into a man who is engaged in a conference with a *ribaude*, without caring if he brings blushes to the cheeks of the passers-by:

*Un homs trouvai en ribaudez,
En la rue de Betisi
Entré: ne fus pas éthisi.*

Guillot did not turn aside for a little thing like this. He had arrived in the rue de l'Arbre-Sec, and he was careful not to forget a little *cul-de-sac*, which still exists under the name of *Cour Baton*, and which formerly possessed the indecent name of *Coul de Bacon*. It is certain that, in the local parlance, the word *bacon* was not endowed with the sense of *flesh of salted pig*, nor are we to seek in this word an image more or less close to its primitive sense. It was, simply, a court of ribaldry (*cour de ribaudie*), with its wells, about which amorous ladies held their assizes. Guillot does not scruple to say:

*Trouvai et puis Col de bacon
Où l'on a trafarcie maint c....*

A curious philosophical dissertation might be made upon this verse, which we, however, recommend to the ghost of Leduchat, but which, rightly done, would permit of the reestablishment of the true acceptance of the old verb *trafarcier* or *trafercer*, which the *Complement du Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* translates badly enough by *traverser*. Guillot follows the bank of the river and arrives at the entrance of the great street which leads to the gate of the Louvre; the nearness of the river indicates sufficiently well the sort of ladies

whom he encounters, and who sell their *denrées* at a price too elevated for his purse:

*Dames i a gentes et bonnes;
De leurs denrées sont trop chiches (or riches).*

He does not lose his time in bargaining for what he is not able to buy, and so takes his way toward Saint-Honoré. After a certain rue de Maître-Huré, a street of which it is not possible now to determine the position, although it was near the rue des Poulies, he undoubtedly had to avail himself of the politeness of certain ladies who wished him welcome:

*La rue trouvai-je maistre Huré,
Lez lui séant dames polies.*

In making of the *maître Huré* a living person instead of the name of a street, one would be forced to accuse this person of an odious trade worthy of the *dames polies* with whom he appears to have been surrounded. Guillot remarks nothing relating to Prostitution in the two streets of la Truanderie, where, however, he does not omit showing us the famous Wells of Love: *le puits le carrefour despart*, he merely says; but he is charmed in the rue Mauconseil:

*Une dame vi sur un seil,
Qui moult se portoit noblement;
Je la saluai simplement,
Et elle moi, par saint Loys!**

The habits of this lady did not differ from those of others of her kind whom we see, in the same streets, practicing the same trade as formerly, waiting and lying in wait for their prey on the thresholds of their houses, at the entrances of dark alleys, calling to and inviting the passers-by. Guillot, who swears by St. Louis by way of reply to this libidinous appeal, might well have reminded this *ribaude* of the ordinances of the Saintly King. When he is in the rue Saint-Martin, he listens to the singing of the office in Notre-Dame de Saint-Martin-

*Translator's Note:—"There I saw upon a doorsill a lady whose bearing was right noble; I greeted her straightaway, and she me, by St. Louis!"

des-Champs, and proceeds continently upon his search of obscene places. He rapidly traverses the rue Beaubourg, which might have offered him the means of satisfying all the instincts of debauchery:

*Alai droitement en Biaubourg,
Ne chassoie chievre ne bouc.**

From the rue des Étuves, he adventures into a rue Lingarière, which could have been no other than the rue Maubue, one of the most ancient strongholds of Prostitution.

*Là où leva mainte plâtrière
D'archal mise en oeuvre pour voir,
Plusieurs gens pour leur vie avoir.*

These ones, who raised an iron grill work to look out into the street, were without doubt the ordinary inhabitants of this rue Maubue, in which there were as many *clapiers* as there were houses, as many dissolute men and women as there were inhabitants. The neighboring streets resented the shameful proximity of this one. Guillot is content with naming the rue Quincampoix (*Qui qu'en poit*), the rue Aubry-le-Boucher and the Conrèerie, which fifteenth-century modesty had transformed into *Corroierie*. He fears that evil may come upon him as he approaches the rue Trousse-Dache, which had taken its ignoble name from the still more ignoble manners of its customary population.

*La rue Amaury de Roussi
Encontre Troussedache chiet,
Que Dieu garde qu'il ne nous meschiet!***

Guillot is approaching the end of his peregrinations; he is so fatigued that he sits down to take a few moments repose in the rue des Arcis; he soon resumes his course and neglects, undoubtedly, to name certain streets as being especially effected by Prostitution. Thus, in passing the rue de l'Étable-du-Cloistre, which could not have been any other

*Translator's Note:—"I went straight along in Beaubourg, and did not hunt either goat or nanny-goat."

**Translator's Note:—"The rue Amaury de Roussi meets Trousse-Dache—God grant no harm befall us there!"

than the rue du Cloître-Saint-Merry, he is surprised at not meeting any *bordelières* of the sort he had seen there at another period, and he recognizes the fact that this street is now respectable (*honestable*); but when he comes to Saint-Merry en Baillehoé,—où *je trouvai beaucoup de boe*, he says—this rue Baillehoé, whose name was but a hideous nickname, and which later took appellation of *Brisemiche*, which it has retained to our day, does not afford him any reminiscences of debauchery, and he leaves it without describing it as it deserves. He goes on in the Marais, and gives a glance of the eye at the rue du Plâtre:

*Ou maintes dames leur emplastre
A maint compagnon ont fait battre,
Ce me semble pour eux esbattre.**

Guillot is tireless in finding periphrases even freer than they are naïve by way of describing the places of which he is in search. At the carrefour *Guillori*, the name of which was equivalent to that of *Jean-de-l'Épine* which it later bore, all the obscenity contained in which the learned De l'Aulnaye has not failed to resurrect, Guillot no longer knows whom to listen to:

Li un dit ho! l'autre hari.

We must assume that he found himself between two *meschines*, each of whom desired to seduce him; but he resisted them: *Ne perdis pas mon essien*, he says, and comes out into the rue Gentien, now the rue des Couquilles, where dwells a *biau varlet*, who, it may be, inspired in him a guilty thought. He does not risk himself in the rue l'Esculerie, which was the cul-de-sac of Saint-Faron, and which did not number one honest man among its inhabitants; he strides rapidly down the rue de Chartron, or des Mauvais-Garçons, near Saint-Jean en Grève:

*On mainte dame en chartre ont
Tenu maint v.. pour se norier (nourrir).*

It is the second time that Guillot shows us, *en chartre*, the despicable

*Translator's Note:—"Where many ladies have had their muffs whipped by many a good fellow, by way of having a good time, I suppose."

artisans of Prostitution; it is clear that their cloistral state was not voluntary but depended solely on police regulation. In the rue du Roi de Sicile, Guillot remembers a lady named Sedile, who lodged in the rue Renaut-Lefèvre, *où elle vend et pois et febves*, he says, in the figurative language to which he has recourse in expressing the mysteries of debauchery. He then makes his way cautiously into the rue de Pute-y-musse, the significant name of which does not permit of any doubt as to its character: this *rue bordelière*, as the people had christened it, preserved always, in tradition, this indecent name, although an attempt had been made to change it into *Petite-Musc* and into *Cloche-Perche*, the name it still bore upon the street sign. Guillot's virtue had escaped many dangers, when he entered the rue Tyron, where he went to see Dame Luce:

*Y entrai dans la maison Luce
Qui maint en la rue Tyron:
Des dames hymnes vous diron.**

We do not think, with the Abbé le Boeuf, that there is question here of canticles or religious hymns, such as might have been sung by a convent of penitent women. The *maison Luce* has all the physiognomy of a bad house, and the hymns sung in it were evidently addressed to Venus. Such is the gallant abbey which we persist in seeing in this street, in which archaeologists have imaginatively placed a dwelling belonging to the Abbot of Tiron. Guillot, at the end of his excursion, proceeds to give himself a good time; in the rue Percée, one of the five streets which then bore the name, indicating an ancient *impasse* transformed into a street, he takes his repose and refreshment:

*Une femme vi destrecié
Pour soi pignier, qui ne donna
De bon vin....*

This lady, who combs herself, or adjusts her clothing, as she pours wine for Guillot, could have been no other than a public woman. But Guillot is not tired; he goes from the rue des Poulies-Saint-Paul into the rue des Fauconniers,

**Translator's Note:—*"I entered Dame Luce's house in the rue Tyron, where there are ladies who will sing you hymns."

*Où l'on trouve bien, por deniers,
Pour son cors solacier.**

He does not tell us whether he made use of this recipe which he gives his readers. Then, in the rue aux Commanderesses, which is today the rue de la Coutellerie, Guillot contradicts himself by saying:

*Où el a maintes tencheresses (querelleuses)
Qui ont maint homme pris au brai (à la pipée).***

Finally, Guillot's task is completed; he has gathered the mud from all the streets of Paris, and he glories in his *Dit*, which he has rhymed in honor of those streets; nor does he hesitate to dedicate this work, brimming as it is with obscenities, "to the sweet Lord of the firmament" and "to his very sweet and dear mother" (*au doux Seigneur du Firmament and a sa tresdouce chiere mere*).

This dedication fails to purge Guillot's rhymes; but another anonymous poet who lived at the end of the fourteenth century conceived the idea of appropriating the *Dit des Rues*, depriving it of its obscene ear-marks and rejuvenating the style of this ballad, in which many streets were unrecognizable on account of changes in name. It was Henri Geraud who published this new *Dit* from a manuscript in the national Archives, and who dated it as following the Subsidy (*Taille*) imposed upon the inhabitants of Paris in 1292, in his work entitled *Paris sous Philippe-le-Bel*. Let us remark in this connection that the records of the *Taille* contained no details which may be taken as referring to Prostitution, which would tend to prove that the women *folles de leurs corps* were not subject at least under this designation, to extraordinary levies, and that their degraded condition exempted them from paying a graduated tax. The poet who desired to make over Guillot's poem, but who frequently does no more than reproduce it in abbreviated form, was particularly concerned with removing from it anything which tended to give it a libertine or unsavory character. This anonymous bard, in place of picturing Guillot for

*Translator's Note:—"Where for his deniers one readily finds consolation for his body."

**Translator's Note:—"Where there are many brawling wenches who have snared many a man."—Allusion here is to the prostitute's calling-out for customers. Hunting "*à la pipée*" was a form of chase in which the hunter imitated the cry of birds.

us as going from street to street to discover bad houses, has invented a plot that is amusing enough: he takes the stage himself, as being newly disembarked at Paris, where he had never been before, and runs all over the capital, seeking, from street to street, his wife, whom he had lost in the neighborhood of Notre-Dame; nothing can distract him from his search, which proves fruitless, and all the women whom he meets at every step cannot make him forget his wife, until, having ended his conjugal pursuit, through 310 streets, which he is careful to enumerate, he finally cries:

*Tant l'ay quise, que j'en suis las!
Or la quiere qui la voudra:
Jamais mon cor pas ne la querra.**

In this dictionary of streets, he speaks of nothing but *chambrières*, which were to rent in the rue des Lavendières, and of the *trusseresses* of the rue aux Commanderesses; but he mentions, otherwise, the most ill-famed streets without even alluding to the nature of their ill renown.

After the *Dit des Rues* of Guillot, there is an interval of nearly a century until the first ordinance of the provost of Paris, which fixes the places in which Prostitution was permitted to have free course without being exposed to any penalty. This ordinance, reported by Delamare, is of the 18th of September, 1367. We may see already the moralizing influence of the reign of Charles V. In this ordinance, the provost enjoins all women of dissolute life to go and dwell in the *bordeaux* and public places which are destined for them; namely: "at the Abreuvoir Mâcon in la Boucherie, in the rue du Froidmantel, near the Clos Bruneau, in Glatigny, in the Cour Robert-de-Paris, in Baillehoé, in Tyron, in the rue Chapon, in Champ-fleury." These are almost the same places that Guillot had designated in the *Dit des Rues*, but their number has been greatly reduced, and we may conclude from this that the provost's police had endeavored to diminish the deplorable effects of debauchery by disputing the territory over which it was permitted to spread itself. The provost of Paris, moreover, forbade all respectable persons to rent their houses to women of evil life in any other place, under pain of losing the amount of the rental; he also forbade these women to purchase houses out of the

*Translator's Note:—"I've looked for her until I'm tired out! Let him look for her who wants to, now; this hulk of mine will not look any more."

streets reserved for their trade, under pain of losing these houses. Those who were found practicing their infamous trade in other places might be, upon the complaint of two neighbors, arrested by the sergeants and led away as prisoners to the Châtelet. Upon proof of the fact, they were driven out of the city, a levy being made upon their goods to the amount of eight Parisian sous from each of them as wage for the sergeants. There is every evidence that this police measure was carried out with extreme rigor.

The asylums of tolerance which the provost of Paris accorded to Prostitution were courts rather than whole streets; we shall come, later, upon places of much the same appearance in the courts of Miracles, which contained beggars and mendicants, thieves and other malefactors, as the courts of ribaldry did public women and the *dissolute men* who were their ignoble accomplices. The Abreuvoir Mâcon was, in the fourteenth century, a group of hovels surrounding a putrid alley which ran down to the river near the Pont Saint-Michel, at the corner of the rue de la Huchette. This *arbrevoir* (horse pond), which the titles of 1272 designate as *Aquatorium Matisconense* and *Adaquatorium comitis Matisconensis*, drew its name from the proximity of the hôtel des Comtes de Mâcon, situated in the street which still bears their name. This bad place has lasted down to our day. It had a horrible celebrity in the sixteenth century, and libertines insisted upon honoring it with the indecent analogies of its name, which they were obstinate in pronouncing in an obscene fashion. It was undoubtedly on account of this gross equivocation that an attempt was made to unchristen the Abreuvoir Mâconnais and to make of it the *Arbrevoir du Cagnart*, either because it served as a nocturnal retreat for *cagnardiers* (river-rats) or because the inhabitants of the river-bank raised ducks (*canards*). In any case, there were many *cagnardiers*, dangerous vagabonds, who were so-called, according to Pasquier, on account of their mode of life, since like the ducks, "they made their dwelling on the water." Borel, on the other hand, would have it that *cagnardier* is derived from *canis* and that it denotes *those who live like dogs*.

It is difficult to be precise about the place the provost calls *la boucherie*, without any further designation; but although many butchers had set up their stalls in different quarters of the Capital, we may presume there is reference here to the Grand Boucherie of the Apport de Paris, which existed from the tenth century, opposite the Châtelet,

and which was successively enlarged in such a manner as to constitute a sort of burrough in the middle of the city. It was there the beasts, the flesh of which was afterwards sold throughout Paris, were killed and carved. It is easy to understand how the provost might authorize the sojourn of *ribaudes* in the midst of a population of *ribauds*, like the butchers, the fleecers (*écorcheurs*) and the knackers (*équarrisseurs*); there was, at all periods and in all countries, a mark of infamy attached to those professions which exhaled the odor of the blood of animals. On the other hand, certain conditions of morality were demanded of those who handled the meats and who carved them on the stalls of the Grand Boucherie.

The clos Bruneau, the reputation of which had been established by Guillot, a task he had likewise performed for the rues de Glatigny, de Baillehoé and Tyron, included also, in the fifteenth century, a vast space, filled with gardens and vineyards, although the rues Saint-Jean-de-Beauvais and Saint-Hilaire had been formed out of the territory of this close; the *bordes*, filled with women of evil life, had been from remote antiquity widely spread throughout the neighborhood of the clos Brunel, and perhaps were to be found in it, behind the hedges and among the vineyards. The rue Froidmantel, which has been named alternately Frementel, Fresmantel, Fremanteau, etc., in Latin *Frigidum mantellum*, and which has become the rue Fromental, despite its etymology, certainly owed its primitive name to a comic allusion to the ordinance of St. Louis, who deprived of their mantle and their *pelicon* women convicted of Prostitution; those who inhabited the streets of prostitutes, were then, naturally, deprived of their mantle: hence, their nickname of *dames de Froidmantel*.

The fief of Glatigny, which belonged in 1241 to Robert and to Guillaume de Glatigny, had given its name to a labyrinth of narrow and unprepossessing alleys which Prostitution occupied as its special privilege, and of which it had evolved the famous *Val d'amour*; Guillot who entered it by the light of day, had seen there *dames au corps gent*, whom he never feared to meet upon his route. The immoral destiny of Glatigny persisted down to the seventeenth century, when the adjacent streets had been rebuilt and were better inhabited. Sauval and his continuators do not tell us in what quarter the Cour Robert-de-Paris was situated, and the name under which this Court is designated would not aid us in determining its situation, if the Subsidy of 1292 did not end our uncertainty upon this point. This *Cour*, which

must have been very small, since its tax-roll did not number more than thirteen taxable persons, extended to the rue Baillehoé which had the same sort of inhabitants. Henri Geraud supposes that the rue du Renard-Saint-Merry had been carried through to form the Cour Robert-de-Paris. The rue Chapon, which has not changed its name, took that name in the thirteenth century from one of its inhabitants, Robert Beguon, or Begon, or Capon, whom we suppose to have been a king of vagabonds, a master beggar, for *begon* or *beguon* appears to have been derived from *beguinus*, which meant originally *quêteur* or *mendiant*, in English, *beggar*; *Capon*, which comes from *capus*, bird of prey, or falcon, was synonymous with *beguon*. We are not inclined to believe that it was by antiphrasis that the name of Chapon was given to a street which was especially devoted to debauchery. Finally, the rue de *Champfleury*, which, under the name of rue de la Bibliothèque, has always religiously preserved its traditions of the *bordeaux*, had been opened a few years after the establishment of the *parc du Louvre*; in the Subsidy of 1292, it numbers only four taxable persons. This rue de *Champ-fleury*, was composed then of but a few small houses, enclosed with hedges and shaded by trees, in which Prostitution had nothing to fear from the curious glances of passers-by, who came there only to find what they were seeking.

CHAPTER XLIX

WE SHALL continue our pornographic journey about old Paris by calling attention to the suspect streets which are not mentioned as such in Guillot's poem or in the ordinances of the Châtelet. The ancient names of these streets are almost always an indication of their individual character. In the first place, in the Cité, we shall find that, despite the general custom which removed women of evil life from the center of cities to a place beyond the walls and, so to speak, beyond the community life, Prostitution had been preserved in a number of streets in the neighborhood of Saint-Denis-de-la-Châtre, which had witnessed the formation of the first sorority of the Magdalen, as we have reported, in following the traditions collected by Dubreul and Sauval. It was altogether natural that the neighborhood of the *Val d'Amour* of Glatigny should have been invaded by *ribaudes*, who went there "to commit sin" (*commettre le péchié*), according to the expression to be found in old manuscripts. It might be asserted that the majority of these horrible alleys, which disappeared a number of years ago in the course of the great public works in the old Lutetian city, were in the Middle Ages a permanent stamping-ground of debauchery, although the regulations of the municipal police had endeavored to circumscribe this life within the sanctuary of Glatigny. The *rues des Marmousets*, *Cocatrix*, *d'Enfer*, *de Perpignan* and others, which formed a labyrinth of houses jutting one upon another, deprived of daylight and air, were marvellously adapted to the habits of the *bordellières*. We know, for example, that the *rue de Perpignan* had been the *rue Charoui* on account of a wine shop or cabaret known as the *Char doré* (*de carro aurico*); Guillot speaks of this cabaret:

En Charoui,—bonne taverne achiez ovri.

Every tavern became, at need, a place of Prostitution. This tavern of the *rue Charoui* must have been adjoined by a garden planted with roses, since the street took successively the significant names of *Champrousiers*, *Champflory*, and *Champrosy*. This field of roses was, perhaps, but a symbol of the pleasure which one went to seek in this

cabaret, which came to be replaced by a tennis-court, from which the street drew its final name *Pampignon* or *Perpignan*. The name of *Val d'Amour* was applied more particularly to the narrow entrance of the rue de Glatigny, which ran down toward the river, and which led to the wharf Saint-Landry. Along this wharf, where came a few boats laden with wood and wheat, ran a girdle of houses, leaning one against the other and barely able to stand alone, their worm-eaten foundations soaked by the water; these houses sheltered Prostitution of the most abject sort; we shall see Prostitution everywhere taking refuge on the banks of rivers. The dark, dank street, which these hideous structures formed from the rear, was called sometimes the rue du *Port-Saint-Landry-sur-l'Yeu* and sometimes the rue du *Fumier*. The family of the Ursins did not hesitate to build there a *Hôtel* where dwelt one of the most illustrious members of this family. Juvenal des Ursins, provost of merchants and chancellor of France under Charles VI, was the one in question. The presence of this grave personage in a street so ill-famed led to a change in the name of the street, which was known from then on as the rue des Ursins, but its lower extremity (*via inferior*) was called the rue d'Enfer, by allusion to the damnable life which its inhabitants led. We have already hazarded a conjecture, possibly a rash one, regarding the rue des Marmousets, which Guillot appears to picture to us as frequented by *ribauds*, rather than by *ribaudes*. However, a certain list of the streets of Paris, which the Abbé Lebeuf believes to have been drawn up in 1450, registers this street under the name of the rue des *Marmouzètes*. We know also that a great dwelling, known as the maison des Marmousets (*domus Marmosetarum*), to which one climbed by means of outside stairs, existed there down to the sixteenth century. Did this dwelling contain a court of ribaldry? Near it, there was a place of this sort called the *cour Ferry*, which had given its name to the rue des Trois-Canettes. Must we recognize a similar place in the maison de Cocatrix (*domus Coquatricis*), which extended to the Marmousets, and which bore the name of the street in which it was situated? This street, which the archaeologists of Paris supposed to have been honored with the name of a bourgeois who dwelt in it in the thirteenth century, might rather, from its vile renown, provide a curious field for etymological speculation. Thus, in our old language, *cocatre* signifies a capon half castrated (*chapon châtré à demi*); *cocatrix* is, properly, a lizard which lives in wells and cisterns; figuratively, it is a prostitute who *fait des*

coues et des coqs, according to the facetious expression of an old *conteur*. In the *Verba Erotica* of his edition of Rabelais, the learned De l'Aulnay defines *Cocquatrix* as a prostitute, relying upon this definition; and in order to leave no doubt as to the ancient freeholds of the rue Cocatrix, the authors of the great *Histoire de Paris*, Félibien and Lobineau, have extracted from the records of Parliament the opening lines of a decree which begins thus: "On Tuesday, 15th day of June, 1367, enters Jehanne la Peltiere, plaintiff, of the first part, Maistre Jehan d'Alcy and the other inhabitants of the rue des Marmouzêts, of the second part. The plaintiff deposes that he dwells in the rue Coquatrix, where he has kept a brothel since time immemorial," etc. This passage indicates, moreover, that these streets in which there was a *bordel* were looked upon as foreign (*foraines*), that is to say, strangers to the régime and to the common law of the community.

Opposite the bad houses of Glatigny, one found also, in the Cité, other asylums of Prostitution, known only to the vilest of vagabonds. These were the *Caignard* and the arches of the Calandre and the Marché-Palu. Although the aspect of these places is still, today, sufficiently unprepossessing, it would be difficult to form an idea of what they were like in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when they served as a nocturnal retreat for the filthiest debaucheries. The rue de la Calandre, which borrowed its name from the little babbling lark, was filled from morning to night with gatherings of women, who did nothing but "jargon and debate" (*jargonner et débattre*), when they were not engaged in sinning. This street, full of mud and filth, led to the Marché-Palu, the name of which means a pond or marsh (*palus*), and which was nothing but a sewer, a *trou punais*, as they said in those days. But there were only roses in the adjoining lanes, which were not closed until the middle of the seventeenth century. One of these lanes, which, in Sauval's time, still existed in part between the first houses of the Petit-Pont and some of the houses of the Marché-Neuf, was called the *Caignard*, "because," says Sauval (Volume I, page 174), "because it served as a passage for dissolute men and women, who went through there in retiring for the night under the structures of the Petit-Pont, where they led a strange life." Finally, vagabond Prostitution still possessed, in the Cité, two nocturnal *champs de foire*, one under the willow-groves of a little island, which, called the *Ile de Gourdain* in the fifteenth century and the

Ile aux Vaches three centuries before, came to form later the western extremity of the *Ile de la Cité*, and the other upon a small hill which rose at the eastern extremity, and which has always been known as the *Terrain*. This hill, which the rubbish from the reconstruction of Notre Dame had reared in the bed of the river, and which the chapter of the cathedral had appropriated without making actual use of it, became every evening the rendezvous of debauchees and their despicable accomplices; it had been nicknamed for this reason, from the year 1258, *la Motte aux Papelards* (*Motta Papelardorum*). A citation from a sermon of Robert de Sorbon on the subject of Conscience gives us to understand the equivocal sense in which the people thereabouts employed the word *Papelards* to designate the shameless pursuers of fallen women: **imo propter hoc dicuntur papelardi, quia frequentant confessiones*. It is a remarkable fact that the sermon of Robert de Sorbon from which Ducange has taken this singular citation, is almost contemporaneous with the baptism of this *terrain* or *terrail* (*terrale*), where the *Papelards* found someone to talk to. As to the *Ile de la Gourdain*, which had been the *Ile aux Vaches*, according to ancient names which the archaeologists have not attempted to explain, its appellation offers certain analogies or coincidences with *Goudine*, *Gourgandine* and *Gordane*, which were synonyms for *prostitute*. This island, moreover, in which the Templars were burned under the reign of Philip the Handsome, appears to have been a place of punishment devoted particularly to obscene crimes, since there was a desire to keep at a distance from the people those guilty ones who had been defiled by this sort of crime, and who might become a source of scandal, even in their dying moments.

In the *Quartier de l'Université*, which included so many deserted streets, so many closes and uninhabited fields, so many *bordes* and taverns, Prostitution had many retreats which the sergeants of the *Châtelet* did not dare to violate, and through which day and night flowed a constant stream of scholastic youth. An ordinance of Henri II pertaining to the life of the suburbs in 1548 might have been applied to these same places two or three centuries before: "A number of houses in the said suburbs are but retreats of knavish folk, taverns, gaming-houses and *bordeaux*, and the ruin of a great number of young folk, who, drawn there by idleness, profligately consume and squander their youth." It is easy to imagine the debauched needs of this Uni-

*Translator's Note:—Lacroix fails to make his point here.

versity population, composed of robust fellows, the majority of mature age, and frequently perverted by idleness and want. The ordinance of St. Louis had authorized but two asylums of *ribaudes*, the Abreuvoir Mácon and Froidmantel, near the clos Bruneau in the University quarter; but Guillot has indicated six or seven streets where Prostitution was openly practiced. The writers of the time, Jacques de Vitry especially, inform us that each house in the Quartier des Écoles contained at least one bad place. Alain de l'Île, *le docteur universel*, says of the scholars of his time that they preferred to contemplate the beauties of the young girls rather than those of Cicero. It is the Flemish whom Jacques de Vitry pictures as more corrupt than the others: "They are prodigal," he says, "love luxury, good cheer and debauchery, and possess manners that are very relaxed." A prodigious number of women *de bonne volonté* was required to gratify the passions of this undisciplined body of youth, which went in bands to its pleasures as to its studies. Rabelais, in his *Pantagruel*, relating the exploits of Panurge, informs us that the municipal police no longer possessed any authority, in the sixteenth century, over the freeholds of the University, and that the very shadow of an *écolier* was sufficient to put the sergeants of the watch to flight; the result was that dissolute women found themselves under the safeguard of the scholars, the latter being beyond the regulations of the Châtelet. In addition to the rues de la Plâtrière, de Cordeliers, Bon-Puits, des Noyers, des Prêtres-Saint-Séverin, etc., where the author of the *Dit des Rues de Paris* confesses having encountered *mainte meschinete* we are surprised that he did not also make the acquaintance of the Champ-Gaillard and the Champ-d'Albiac. The Champ-Gaillard was a square, or rather a paddock, which extended the length of the walls of Philip-Augustus, from the Porte Saint-Victor to the Porte Saint-Marcel; the street which was open on this site in the thirteenth century took the name of the rue des Murs on account of its situation; it was later called the rue d'Arras, when a college so named was established there in 1332; but the people who had employed *Champ-Gaillard* to describe the street's nocturnal character, did not give up this name, which was further justified by the establishment of a *ribaude* frequented especially by scholars. This bad place was still so celebrated in the sixteenth century that Rabelais, who speaks of it rather from hearsay, cites it along with three others as characteristic of the carryings-on of the scholars of Paris; it is in Chapter VI of the Second

Book, where the Limousin who mangles the French language is relating the deeds of fellows of his kind: "On certain days, we invade the lupanars of the Champ-Gaillard, of Matcon, of the cul-de-sac de Bourbon and Hueleu and, in this venereal ecstasy, we insert our veretres into the inmost recesses of the pudenda of these most amiable meretricules." The language of the Limousin scholar, who flays the Latin in the belief that he is Pindarizing, is sufficiently unintelligible, fortunately, to be quoted as a monument to the erotic lingo of the University.

In the same chapter of Rabelais, there is also a reference to four cabarets, which must have been as ill-famed as the brothels, since we know, from many of the provost's ordinances, that the majority of the *caves* and taverns where drinking took place were kept by public women or by their pimps (*maquignons* or *courratiers*). "Then we repair," says the scholar to Pantagruel, "to the meritorious taverns (*tabernes meritores*) of the Pomme-de-Pin, the Castel, the Madeleine and la Mule." Here we have the *tabernae meritoriae* of the Roman historians, notably Suetonius, which proves to us that the word *meretrix* has been taken from the verb *mereri* and the substantive *meritum*. But we shall not endeavor, by means of an archaeological dissertation, to fix the site of these four *meritorious* taverns,* but shall rather limit ourselves to remarking that their names appear to accord with those of the streets in which they were undoubtedly situated. Thus the rue de la Madeleine and the rue de la Pomme in the Cité have become, since the fourteenth century, the rue de la Licorne and the rue des Trois-Cannettes, while preserving all the while their wine-shops at the signs of Le Madeleine and La Pomme-de-Pin; the rue du Châtel or du Château-Fêtu is composed of a part of the rue de la Ferronnerie, abutting on the rue de l'Arbre-Sec, and a house called the *château-Fetu* or the *château-de-Paille*, the origin of which is not known, has existed for a long time between the church of Saint-Landry and the river: was not the place well chosen for the establishment of a wine-shop

*Translator's Note:—The *Pomme de Pin* is mentioned in Villon. It was situated in the rue de la Juiverie, in the Cité, very near the Madeleine. It was kept, in the fifteenth century (1457), by one Robin or Robert Turgis of some fame, and was renowned for the quality of its cellar ("*propter bonitatem vini*"). The precise location of the *Castel* is uncertain. Its reputation dates from the fourteenth century. It may also have been in the rue de la Juiverie. We do not know where the site of the *Madeleine* was. The tavern *in Mula* is mentioned, from 1446 on, as being in the rue Saint-Jacques, near Saint-Mathurin.

and all the rest? As to the tavern of La Mule, we must go look for it in the rue du Pas-de-la-Mule, which the establishment of the Place Royale has not deprived of its old name, by imposing upon it that of the rue Royale, a name which it has not kept. We shall not hesitate to include, then, in the inventory of the bad houses of Paris, these four famous wine-shops, which are frequently mentioned by the poets and *conteurs* of the sixteenth century.

But this digression on wine-shops has led us a little afield from the *lupanaires* of the University, all of which we do not pretend to know. The rue Gracieuse, which had first borne the name of the rue d'Albiac, had been built on a tract of land which was called the Champ-d'Albiac, and which had been, from time immemorial, devoted to Prostitution; the retreats which it had occupied by hereditary right were not destroyed until 1555, as we shall see under this date. The antiquarian etymologists have found, in the *Comptes* of Paris, the name of a family *d'Albiac* and that of a family *Gracieuse*, which they present to us as the rival sponsors of this same street, so dubiously populated at all periods; but if we were to hazard a conjecture which is more in keeping with the character of the place, we should prefer to recognize in the name d'Albiac an allusion to the Albigeois (*Albiaci* and *Albigenses*), who were heretics in religion, but also in love, according to popular opinion, which confounded under the terms *Albigeois* and *Albiacs* all the hopeless debauchees. The Champ-d'Albiac became, then, the *champ de foire* of these impurities, and the street which opened upon this retreat was nicknamed *Gracieuse*, out of mockery or by antinomy.

There were other fields where the *ribaudes* kept their "little shops of sin" (*boutiques au pérché*), such as the champ de la Boucherie, near the rue des Mauvais-Garçons; the champ Petit, near the rue de Battoir; the champ de l'Allouette, etc. The word *champ* designated ordinarily, a place where one bought and sold. In our catalogue of streets and alleys of this sort, we are not to forget the rue de l'*Aronde*, or de l'*Hirondelle*, neighboring the Arbrevoir Mâcon, which Rabelais, little concerned with obscene etymologies, calls *Matcon*. This rue de l'*Hirondelle*, which hides away, dark and infected, behind the houses of the quai Saint-Michel, had drawn its name from the sign of a place of debauchery. Nearby, it would be easy to discover a very significant equivocation in the name of the rue Gît-le-Coeur, which has been called in turn, by an involuntary or malicious corruption, *Villequeux*, *Guillequeux*, *Gilles-Queux*, *Gui-le-Compte*, etc. At a little distance

from this street (apropos of which we should keep in mind the witty parenthesis of Boufflers: *I say the heart out of decency*), there was still the rue Pavée, which the wagging tongues of the time called the rue Pavée-d'Andouilles. The neighboring streets, the ancient names of which bear witness to their ancient industry, were equally infested with bad women. The rue *Sac-à-Lie*, a soubriquet given to women of this sort, has since become the rue Zacharie; the rue de l'Éperon was called the rue de Gaugai (*gaugay*,) and advertised thus sufficiently well the sort of pastimes which were to be found in it. Finally, it was in this labyrinth of lanes, which had replaced the vineyard of Laas or Liaas, that vagabond Prostitution paraded its amours; it is between the rue de Hurepoix and the rue Poupée that we shall endeavor to find the *lupanaire du cul-de-sac de Bourbon*, which the commentators of Rabelais transport to a site near the Louvre. In a word, the University quarter was richer in places of debauchery, or at least, better populated with prostitutes, than all the other quarters of Paris; there is no need of proof in this case, if we reflect upon the licentious habits of the scholars, who never left their own quarter but who had close at home sufficient *chiere-lie*, as they would have said, to make it unnecessary for them to go seek it elsewhere. Scholars who have written dissertations upon the streets of Paris have confined themselves to reconstructing under their own names; they have failed to remark that these names of streets, most of them the result of popular whims, were transferred to men rather than the names of men to the streets; and the same scholars have almost never taken cognizance of etymology. Thus, when they desire to study the origin of the name of the rue Bordet, which leaves the fountain Sainte-Geneviève and runs up to the rue Mouffetard, at the very spot where the Porte Bordelle was, which has bequeathed its name, they assume that a personage named Pierre de Bordelles (*de Bordelis*) dwelt in this street in the twelfth century, and that he naturally left it a perfectly respectable name. "It is a popular error," say the authors of the *Dictionnaire Historique de la Ville de Paris*, "to believe that on account of the resemblance in name, this street must have been formerly devoted to debauchery." It is certain, however, that Pierre de Bordelles himself bore this character, since he possessed a house in this street, which was named *Bordelles*, *Bourdelle* and *Bordel*, by reason of its primitive employment and the numerous *bordes* to be found close up to the walls of Paris. The rue Bourdelle, which led to

the gate of the same name, by no means gives the lie to this indecent appellation, which is also confirmed by the proximity of the Champ Gaillard, which was changed into Chemin-Gaillard, when a street was cut through, and which is now the rue Clopin, a modern name which still reflects the tradition of bad morals attaching to all these streets near the walls and gates of the city.

It merely remains for us to indicate the situation of certain courts of ribaldry, which were called the Courts of Miracles, for the reason that beggars who assembled there, and who pretended the most hideous infirmities in order to win public sympathy, would appear there lame, crippled, blind, one-armed, leprous and covered with ulcers, and would return of an evening sound of leg, joyous and well disposed to spend the night in debauchery. These Courts of Miracles held a population of thieves, vagabonds, robbers, mendicants, and other abject creatures. The most ancient of these infamous caverns was that of la Grande-Truanderie, which sent whole colonies into all quarters of Paris, where the provost police permitted them to open a court. The two great branches of la Truanderie were *the little houses of the Temple*, or *les loges des Aumones* in the rue des Francs-Bourgeois au Marais and the *Cour des Miracles* par excellence, near the Filles-Dieu, between the rues Saint Denis and Montorgueil. There were, in addition, more than twenty courts or retreats of the same sort, where the same base and disorderly life was led. It will be sufficient to mention the Cour de la Jussienne in the rue Montmartre, beside the chapel of prostitutes dedicated to Saint Mary the Egyptian; the Cour Gentien in the rue des Coquilles; the Cour Brisset, in the rue de la Mortellerie; the Cour de Bavière in the rue Bordet; the Cour Sainte-Catherine and the Cour du roi Francois in the rue du Ponceau; the Cour Tricot in the rue Montmartre; the Cour Bacon in the rue de l'Arbre-Sec, etc. Sauval says, in speaking of the dangerous inmates of the rue des Francs-Bourgeois: "At every hour, their street and their house were a cut-throat asylum for debauchery and prostitution." Sauval gives us also a most terrifying picture of the principal Court of Miracles, which he had viewed in all its splendor, at the time it served as a refuge for the most criminal, most indecent and most ignoble of the population of Paris. It was here that Prostitution with impunity achieved the last degree of vice.

This Court of Miracles had had formerly a considerable extent; but it had become imperceptibly restricted between the rue Montor-

gueil, the convent of the Filles-Dieu and the rue Neuve-Saint-Sauveur; it no longer consisted of anything more than an irregular plot of ground and a muddy and malodorous cul-de-sac. "To come there," says Sauval, "it is frequently necessary to make a detour in little streets, villainous, stinking, and roundabout; to enter it, it is necessary to descend a long slope, tortuous, rugged and unequal. I have seen there a mud house, half buried and about to fall to the ground from old age and rottenness, where dwelt more than fifty families with an infinite number of small children, some legitimate, others not, and all of them naked." Sauval, who has collected these curious details relating to the inhabitants of the Courts of Miracles, unfortunately tells us nothing about the women whom the *royaume argotique* enrolled under the government of *Grand Coesre*. We are inclined to regret that we do not possess a life-like and moral portrait of these subjects of the king of beggars and *argotiers*, when we come upon the following strange detail pertaining to their infamous trade: "Girls and women," related Sauval, "those that are the least ugly, prostitute themselves for two liards, the others for a double, the majority for nothing. Many of them give silver to those who have begot children by their companions, in order that they may have children, too, and thereby acquire the means of exciting compassion and obtaining alms." The price of the prostitutes at the great Court of Miracles was undoubtedly whatever a woman might choose to ask; but it is to be observed that two liards in the time of Sauval were worth about ten sous in our money, and that the double denier of Tours represented two-thirds of a liard, that is to say three sous in present currency.* We doubt if the price of prostitution ever fell lower than this.

It is to be understood that this sort of Prostitution was always beyond the authority of the police of the Châtelet. The poor wretches who practiced it, protected by the franchise of the Court of Miracles, belonged to the cosmopolitan race of beggars and thieves who peopled these asylums of crime. They were covered with rags, squalid and unkempt; the majority, who had *cagot* or Bohemian blood in their veins, were distinguished by their repulsive ugliness, their tawny complexions, their curly hair and their infected odor; those with white skin and blonde hair passed as pretty, and served thus as a lure for strangers whose evil star had led them at night into the vicinity of the Court of Miracles. The belle trained to this species of chase

**Translator's Note*:—The price, that is to say, ranged roughly from 3 cents to a dime.

would tease the pruriency of the prey she had snared at the street-corner; sometimes she would burst into tears, inventing a fable designed to excite his compassion; sometimes under countless pretexts, she would induce the imprudent one to follow her; sometimes she would insult him or entice him into an argument with her, in order that she might have occasion to cry for aid; then, her accomplices, father, brothers, and friends, would come running at the sound of her voice and hurl themselves upon the man whom she accused of some imaginary insult, robbing him upon the spot, mistreating and even assassinating him, if he sought to defend himself. The same fate awaited the unfortunate one who, having permitted himself to be seduced by this street-corner siren, had had the courage to follow her into her den. Again it was a father, a husband or a brother who came to him to demand an explanation of the seduction which he had not been given time to accomplish, and willing or unwilling, the victim would have to pay a ransom, which included everything he had upon his person except his clothing. He was lucky if he was permitted to escape safe and sound with his shirt! There is no need to say that the ruses and the theory of this amorous art were taught by the father to his daughter, the husband to his wife, the brother to his sister. Very young children were devoted to the most frightful forms of corruption; they made of their bodies a pasture, sold, abandoned and sacrificed to the lubricity of their parents or their masters; they had no notion of good or evil, especially so far as those things having to do with modesty were concerned; lad or lass, their first step in life led in the direction of the most shameless Prostitution, and they never emerged from this mire into which they had once put their feet. Here in all times was the nursery of prostitutes, who would leave to seek their fortune, and who would return when they had grown old in the harness. Here they would continue their trade at a vile price, and if they no longer found two liards or one double for wages, they would resign themselves to a change of occupation and, according to their condition or capacity would resort to horoscopes, reading the future in the lines of the hand, preparing love-beverages, philtres and amulets, or selling the fat and locks of hair of hanged men for evil spells and magical operations.

There is no ground for believing that the proprietors of the houses in a street thus given over to the service of public debauchery were greatly interested in restricting this shameful industry which brought

them large benefits. We see, on the contrary, from a long-drawn-out legal action which occurred in connection with the rue Baillehoé, that the purpose of a street of this sort constituted a privilege looked upon as very advantageous by the proprietors and tenants, who were always jealous in protecting and preserving this privilege. This legal action, of which we find traces here and there in the records of Parliament, lasted for more than a century and was frequently revived by the interested parties, who were, on the one hand, certain bourgeois citizens, possessors of houses in this infamous street, and on the other hand, the curate and the canons of Saint-Merry. The provost of Paris and the King alternately intervened in the debate, serving only to embroil the parties all the more by their contradictory edicts and ordinances. Parliament, taking up the affair in its turn, sided first with one and then the other side, enacted decrees, and ordered inquiries, but felt that it did not have the courage to wipe out laws founded upon the legislation of St. Louis and confirmed by long usage. A decree of the 24th of January, 1388, reported in the *Histoire de Paris* by Félibien and Lobineau (Vol. IV, page 538), makes us acquainted with the state of the question and the reciprocal claims of the parties to the litigation. The dean, the curate and the canons had obtained letters-royal definitely suppressing Prostitution in the rue Baillehoé, and an ordinance of the provost of Paris, Jean de Folleville, newly elected, enjoined the public women who inhabited this street to vacate. But inasmuch as the women were backed by the proprietors of the houses which they occupied, they were not keen about obeying the ordinances of expulsion; and so, the provost sent archers to drive them out by force and masons to wall up the entrances to their dwellings. The proprietors, damaged in their interests and indignant at this abuse of authority, made a complaint before Parliament and cited the dean, the curate and the canons of Saint-Merry, whom they accused of having abused the authority of the King and the provost. These respectable proprietors had delegated their full powers to three of their number, Jacques de Braux, called Jacobin, Philippe Gibier and Guillaume de Nevers. Let us listen, then, to the arguments of each side, remembering that the case was undoubtedly heard in solemn audience and pleaded by the best advocates at the Parisian bar.

The dean, the curate and the canons alleged that the King, St. Louis, had ordered that the *ribaudes* should not dwell any longer

"in decent streets and places" (*en lieux et rues honnêtes*); the acting provost of Paris averred that the rue Baillehoé fell within the conditions prescribed by the ordinance, and he expelled the ribaudes from this street, condemning to a fine that is to say, to quadruple the rents (*au quadruple du louage*), the owners of the houses rented to these dissolute women. "The street," the defenders added, "is near to fine, great and notable ones, where dwell many goodmen and their wives and the canons and chaplains of the said church. Moreover many inconveniences have ensued, and many greater inconveniences may ensue, for if any collier or ruffian slays a man, it would be in a church that he would seek a retreat; for it is a fine street and an honest one that goes to Saint-Merry, and from this street into la Verrerie; and in such streets, so thoroughly respectable, there ought not to dwell light women (*femmes folieuses*). Item, that this street is near a monastery, and near the monastery such women ought not to dwell, and it is a road by which the canons and the chaplains must go to church."

The plaintiffs replied "that it is expedient that such women be kept off the public streets, in suburbs, and that they do less evil and inconvenience there than in other streets; that the street is narrow and is not good for any but this trade, and that there are there but small shops, and that if anyone there commits any crime he can only flee by the high-street, and would be more easily taken than if this crime had been committed far from the high-street; and that in all times such women have dwelt in the said streets; and that anciently it had a gate but, by reason of an inconvenience which occurred in the said street, the gate was torn down, and since that time it has always remained without a wall." They recalled, on this point, that under the reign of Charles V, Hugues Aubriot, provost of Paris, having visited the brothels, suppressed a number of them but left the one in Baillehoé, for the reason that shameful folk had better go there (*gens honteux oseroient mieux y aller*) than to the others. They asserted that the church of Saint-Merry was also interested in seeing that the purpose of the street is not changed, "on account of the revenues, which are thereby increased, and this said reason, namely that: *in virorum honestorum domibus saepe lupanaria exercentur, etc.*,"* *Dieu Mercy* such an evil never was in Baillehoé!" They argued from

**Translator's Note*.—"In respectable citizens' houses lupanars are frequently conducted."

the ordinances of St. Louis, who had willed that there should be a brothel ("il y eût bordel") in Baillehoé, as in Glatigny and in the Cour Robert-de-Paris: "that such women thus should dwell near la Verrerie; and now, there are no more in the Cour Robert de Paris; as a consequence, it is expedient that they should dwell in Baillehoé." They objected, moreover, that this little street was not the natural passage in going to the church, and that the high-street of Saint-Merry led there more directly; one might also avoid, thus, passing the body of Our Lord when it was being brought to the sick, although frequently no scruple was made of bearing it through the rue Tiron, which was not any more decent; "and it is expedient," they concluded, "that the brothel should be near the church, for no matter how many women sin, they are not all damned, and it is expedient that they should dwell near the church, in order that they may be near that from which they are so far. And it is not inconvenient that brothels should be near the church, for we see that Glatigny is near Saint-Denis de la Chartre, one of the most devout churches of this city, and also near Saint-Landry." The defense, in their reply, avoided touching on a question so prickly as that of the suitability of churches and brothels adjoining each other. They limited themselves to pointing out that the letter of the ordinances of Saint Louis was opposed to having women of evil life dwell near the churches, and they cited a text of the Roman law in support of this decision: *Deterius est quod penes sacrosanctas aedes morentur*. "And by natural right," they added sorrowfully, "there is no citizen of whatever rank in this city who does not possess the right, when occasion calls for it, to require such women to vacate the vicinity of his house; by all the more reason, the dean who is the curate, and who must go, at matins and all other hours, to baptize children and succor the sick and bear the *corpus Domini* has the right to make such a requisition, for it is the most direct route from the Church of Saint-Merry to the rue de la Brille (undoubtedly, the rue de Poirier) and Simon-le-Franc, and for the good wives to come to the church by way of Baillehoé."

We do not know positively at what period this litigation ended, but we must regard as one of its last episodes the ordinance of Henry VI, king of England and of France, who declared, in 1424, in favor of the curate and the chapter of Saint-Merry. It is probable, however, that despite all the royal ordinances or those of the provosts, Prostitution never abandoned a street which it had "enjoyed and used

for so long a time that there is no recollection to the contrary" (*joui et usé par tel et si long temps, que ne est mémoire du contraire*). But the curate of Saint-Merry took vengeance, it is said, on one of the property-owners of this street, whom he had had for adversary in the matter concerning the "little shops of sin," and he had the fellow officially condemned to make honorable amends on a Sunday after the mass, before the door of the church, for having been guilty of eating meat on Friday. This was not all: the chapter, having finally triumphed over judiciary opposition, changed the indecent name of the street, which was thereafter confounded with its neighbor, the rue Brisemiche, and which lost in a manner its old ignominious character; for in pronouncing the word Baillehoé, the people added an indecent pantomime and grimaces which no longer had any sense with respect to the rue Taillepain or Brisemiche. All the etymologies of Baillehoé were equally significant, whether one wrote *Baillehoué* or *Baillehore* or *Baillehort* or whether one preferred to adopt the ancient orthography of *Baillehoc* or *Baillehoche*; for the verb *baille* varied in acceptation, according to the word which was used with it, and this other word always carried with it an obscene sense; *houe* is an instrument of labor; *hore* is a public woman; *hort* is a violent shock; *hoc* is that; *hoche* is a gash,* etc. In a word, an indecent connotation was constantly attached to the names of this street, which, in losing its equivocal names, did not become any the more decent, since in the last century the women of the rue Brisemiche were still proverbially renowned.

The document which we have analyzed in speaking of the litigation of the vestry of Saint-Merry against the property-owners of Baillehoé permits us to fix certain points in pornographic archaeology. We may, almost with certitude, determine the fact that these streets devoted to Prostitution had been formerly closed by night with gates; that these streets, haunted by *ribaids* and dissolute fellows, were frequently the scene of brawls, murders and grave inconveniences; that, nevertheless, houses here rented more dearly than elsewhere and produced good revenues for their proprietors or tenants; that the *femmes folieuses* had free entrance to the churches, where they went less to pray than to seek adventure; finally, that the presence of a brothel was advantageous to a parish by reason of the alms which its *pensionnaires* paid to the curate and the vestry. Let us remark,

*Translator's Note:—Cf. our similar underworld obscenity.

moreover, that, from then on, a custom of the force of law, and one which has come down to our day, authorized any bourgeois to make a complaint against any woman of evil life whom he desired to expel from her house or from his own neighborhood, an expulsion which was accomplished by the sergeants of the Châtelet, charged with the policing of prostitutes and of the places of debauchery.

CHAPTER L

WE HAVE said that the *Livre de la Taille of Paris* for the year 1292 does not afford any fact relative to Prostitution; but having examined anew this document, which is so valuable for the history of Paris at this period, we believe that we may modify, somewhat, this judgment which, while a valid one at the first glance of the eye, deserves to be accepted with certain reservations; for if, in short, we do not find anywhere in the *quêtes* of the subsidy a precise designation of common women who practised the trade of ribaldry, we are still tempted to recognize them here and there under characteristic soubriquets. It is certain always that these women did not pay tax in the extraordinary levies for the profit of the king, in their character of *ribaudes*: but they did pay as tenants of the houses which they inhabited in the city, in addition to their "little shops of sin". We know nothing, unfortunately, of the conditions accompanying the levy; for example, it is impossible for us to understand why Paris, which possessed under Philip the Handsome a population of 400,000 souls or thereabouts, furnished but 15,200 taxable persons according to the calculations of the scholar Henri Geraud, paying altogether 12,218 pounds and 14 sous. These taxables were certainly not from the richest inhabitants, whom the privileges of the bourgeois exempted from the tax; they also were not the poorest, as we see from the differences in fortune which seem to account for the variations in the tax. We shall not credit the strange suppositions of Dulaure, who would have it that the number of *tailles* indicated the number of *feux* (fire-sides); if this were the case, the tax-roll would not mention as subject to a special tax children, valets, chambermaids, and workers'-helpers. We shall hazard a conjecture which is not based upon written proofs, by saying that the tax only affected individuals lodged upon the ground floor and possessing an *ouvuoir* or *fenêtre*, or a direct issuance upon the king's pavement. This conjecture, which there is, moreover, nothing to contradict, has the advantage of explaining naturally the singular disproportion which existed between the number of inhabitants and the number of taxable persons, among whom women did not count for the tenth part.

The tax of 1292 enables us to determine one fact which is confirmed

by a number of subsequent ordinances of the provost of Paris: namely, that the streets given over to public debauchery were open to women of evil life only at certain hours of the day, when they freely practiced their abject profession in the brothels or other dens. We shall see that they did not lodge for the night in those same streets; it was as if the legislator desired that they should have the chance to breathe a purer air, by being forced to leave the infamous atmosphere where they spent their days. We shall meet them, then, at such times, only in the neighboring streets, and we shall find little difficulty in locating them, through their popular nicknames and the uniform tax they paid. Before going to look for them in the parishes where they hid their existence, leading lives that were frequently almost respectable in appearance, since they were sometimes married and kept a home, before going to look for them here, we must extract from the *Livre de la Taille* a very bizarre detail which the editor has let pass unperceived, but which relates to the history of Prostitution. In the census of *menues gens* who resided in the Quartier Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, and who were all taxed indifferently to the amount of one sou or twelve deniers a head, we are astonished to find the master of the revels of Queen Marie (*roi des ribaus de la royne Marie*: see page 5 of the *Livre de la Taille*, published with *commentaries* by H. Geraud). Who is this master of the revels who had his dwelling in the rue d'Osteriche, today the rue de l'Oratoire, opposite the Louvre? One thing is certain, we are not here dealing with an officer of the household of the king of France; and his miserable quota testifies clearly enough to his low condition. This is not the master of the revels of the court of France, this one who pays into the treasury the same revenue as Adam le cavelier, Jehan menjuepain (the mendicant) and Helissent, *ferbière de linge*.

There was, as we have said, a *roi des ribauds* elected in each *court of ribaldry*, and this species of porter, charged with maintaining order in the *clapier*, was but a shabby caricature of the master of the revels of the royal household. This fellow of the rue d'Osteriche was connected with the poorest establishment of its kind in the city, and the pompous title which he took unto himself did not prevent his being a beggar of a hideous sort. As to that *royne Marie*, whose officer and minister he declares himself to be, she could have been none other than a *ribaude* or some old procuress who had been enthroned as queen by her subjects or her companions. There is no other conclusion

to draw from this description of "queen" applied to a woman by the name of Marie, who possessed a master of the revels taxed at twelve deniers; and it is futile to attempt to prove that this pitiful *roi des ribauds* could, in any case, have been attached to Queen Marie de Brabant, widow of Philip the Handsome, who was still living at this time. We are justified in believing, from this simple indication, that at least in certain establishments, the public women chose a queen, like the other corporations of women, notably the laundresses, the seamstresses, the herring-women, etc. This queen must naturally have had a master of the revels, charged with a special policing of the bad-house where his immodest mistress reigned. Perhaps, also, the name of *queen* was attributed to the governess of a court of feminine ribalds. We have beheld, in following the history of the kings of France in the sixteenth century, a governess of this species, to whom the ordinances of Francis I and Henry II do not accord the honors of an indecent royalty. In general, the *clapier* being honored with the comical title of *abbey* in the picturesque language of the people, the directress of such an abbey was called the *abbess* or *prioress*. We might also suppose that this Queen Marie had been elected by one of those joyous associations of *fous*, *conards*, *jongleurs*, etc., who simulated a government with a burlesque imitation of the officers of royalty.

We come, then, in our inquiry to those women of no profession whom the *Taille* of 1292 shows us as lodged in the suspect streets, and in the environs of those streets devoted to Prostitution. We shall remark, first of all, among the *menues gens* of the parish Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, each inhabitant of which was taxed twelve deniers: Florie du Boscage (of the wood), who dwelt beyond the port Saint-Honoré and, as a consequence, upon the moat of the city; Ysabiau l'epinete in the rue Froidmantel of the Louvre, which has barely disappeared with its old retreats of debauchery; Jehanne la Normande in the rue de Biauboir, which still existed forty years ago under the name of the rue de Beauvais; Edeline l'Enragiée (the Mad) in the rue Richebourg, which is at present the rue du Coq-Saint-Honoré; Aaliz la Bernée, at the corner of the Abreuvoir, which was at the entrance of the rue des Poulies; Aaliz la Morelle, (the night shade) in the rue Jehan Evrout, which has left no traces; la Baillie (the Bailiff) and Perronnelle-aux-chiens (hussy of the dogs) in the rue des Poulies; Letois, daughter of Aaliz-sans-argent (Alice without Money) in the rue D'Averon, which is the rue Bailleul. The dark and

tortuous streets inhabited by these women, whose soubriquets indicate clearly enough their profession, never ceased to be inhabited by the riff-raff of the population. Among the *menues gens* of the Quartier Saint-Eustache, we find Perronelle la Sirène (or Siren), Anès l'*Alèlète* (the Lark), Jehanne la *Meigrète*, Marguerite la Galaise, Geneviève la Bien-Fêtée (the Toast), Jehanne la Grant, etc. The same soubriquets have been preserved traditionally in the world of popular Prostitution.*

In the same quarters and the same streets, the tax of 1292 indicates also, by similar soubriquets, a number of women who may have lived by their bodies, but who drew from their trade a better livelihood, since they are taxed at the rate of two, three, and even five sous. Such were, beyond the Porte-Saint-Honoré, Ysabiau la Camuse (the Pug-Nose) and Maheut la Lombarde; in the rue Froidmantel, Marguerite la Brete and Ysabiau la Clopine (the lame); in the rue Biauvoy, Anès la Pagesse (the Page); in the rue Richebourg, Juliotte la Beguine (the Nun), Jehanne la Bourgoingne, Maheut la Normande, Gile la Boiteuse (the limping one), etc. It must be observed that the poor and ill-famed streets which took in such inhabitants as these were not occupied otherwise except by workmen of the lowest class: fishermen, ferry-men, cobblers, old-clothes-dealers, etc. In the streets with the most traffic and those that were the best inhabited one often did not remark a single woman of doubtful character. We shall meet with such suspect women as these only in the neighborhood of those streets occupied by the *bordelières*, where they did not have their lodgings, as we shall prove further on. Thus, in the rue de Glatigny, where debauchery had its most famous *atelier*, one undoubtedly did not come upon very respectable persons: there were Margue la Crespinier, Jean le Pasteur, Helois la Chandelière, Jaque le Savetier, etc. But when we find among the tenants of this infamous street a certain Jeharaz, who pays 22 sous, Guibert the Roman, who pays 25, the wife of Nicholas, the beer merchant, and his two daughters, who pay together 38 sous, and Giles Marescot, who pays 36—in view of these assessments, we are tempted to take these individuals as middle-men of the bad houses, and to go look for their *pensionnaires* in the neighboring streets. Among the latter we find Mabile l'Escot (or l'Ecosaise), Perronèle Grosente, Lucette, Lorencete, Agnes aux Blanches Mains (of the white hands), Jehannette la Popine and others whom

*Translator's Note:—Cf. the nicknames of the Greek hetairai.

we recognize as "ladies of love" (*femmes d'amour*). In a center of Prostitution not less active than the *Val d'Amour*, in Baillehoé and in the Cour Robert-de-Paris, we do not come upon more than four women without a profession among the thirty-eight taxable ones, the most heavily taxed of whom, it is true, does not pay more than five sous: they are Ameline Belessez, Ameline la Petite (the Little One), Anès la Bourgoingne and Maheut la Normande, who are taxed at two sous each; the chambermaid of Maheut is taxed the same as her mistress, whose labors and blessings apparently she shares. But in the adjacent streets, there are women recognizable by their nicknames, and who belong undoubtedly to the *ribaudie* of Baillehoé, although they have their domicile in Honete Mesgine. Let us cite merely Chretienne and Marie, her sister, in the rue Neuve-Saint-Merry; Juliane and Anés, *her nurse*, in the same street; Ameline la Grasse (the Fat), Marie la Noire (the Black), Marie la Picarde, Anès la Grosse (the Large), Jehanne la Sage (the Wise), in the rue Simon-le-Franc, etc. We do not have here, certainly, the whole personnel of Prostitution in these populous quarters, and it is very difficult for us to appreciate the motives which led to including one *ribau* rather than another in the taxable lists.

It must be stated, also, that all the prostitutes were not occupied exclusively with their shameful profession, and that the majority of them were scattered among various kinds of trades. It would appear to be in accordance with the spirit of the ordinances of St. Louis, which were the ones that controlled Prostitution, that every woman should be free to do what she pleased with her body, and might make a traffic of it at her own discretion, provided she abandoned herself to sin only in "the brothels and streets anciently ordained for this" (*les anciens bordaux et rues à ce ordonnées d'anciennete*). From the terms of many acts of parliament, Delamare, who was familiar with all legislation of the Châtelet, arrived at the same opinion regarding the state of public women, who were such only in so far as the practice of their shameful profession was concerned, but who otherwise were almost on an equality with the respectable women. It would result naturally, from this singular distinction, that the municipal authorities did not molest women in their private lives, so long as they conformed scrupulously to the ordinances, and did not become common prostitutes by putting foot in the places devoted to local and transient Prostitution. She who prostituted herself in a bad house, found

purification, so to speak, as soon as she had left it. We may explain in this manner a judgment of the magistrates of Bordeaux, who condemned to the gallows a man guilty of having raped a public woman. This memorable judgment is reported by Angelo-Stefano Garoni, in his treatise on jurisprudence, entitled: *Commentaria in Titulem de meretricibus et lenonibus Constit. Mediol.* "The infamous places of prostitution," says Delamare, in his *Traité de la Police*," were common to a number of these public women, and their dwellings were separate from them. This was a place of assemblage, whither they had the liberty of repairing for their evil commerce, and which was set aside for them in order to render them readily recognizable, and to keep away those who were still susceptible to some feeling of modesty." It was forbidden them (according to the *Livre Vert Ancien* of the Châtelet, fol. 159) to commit prostitution anywhere else, even in their private dwellings, under penalties laid down in the regulations. They thought to evade these wise precautions by repairing at so late an hour to the public places, that they would barely be known there, and the neighbors would not see them go in.

From then on, regulations were enacted concerning the hours of entering and leaving the *bordeaux* and *clapiers*, which were not open till daybreak, and which were closed at sunset. There is no evidence, however, that the women who went there to commit sin were subject to any registration whatsoever; but we may suppose, certainly, that they were called upon to meet a fixed assessment, which figured in the budget of the city, or which was part of the revenues of the royal master of the revels. The provost of Paris enacted an ordinance on the 13th of March, 1374, decreeing that: "all women who assemble in the rue Glatigny, the Abreuvoir Mâcon, Baillehoé, the Cour Robert-de-Paris and other brothels shall be required to retire from and leave these streets after the hour of ten at night, on pain of a fine of 20 Parisian sous for each infraction." The amount of the fine, which was equivalent to more than 20 francs* proves, it seems to us, that the wages of a day of sin were not less than this fine, which went undoubtedly as a moiety to the sergeants of the Châtelet; it was later left to the discretion of the judge, and was, as a consequence, doubled or quadrupled, which permits us to suppose that women of high rank did not fear, sometimes, to run the risk of these infamous places, and that they cared little for the fine, provided they purchased thereby

*Translator's Note:—Over \$4.

impunity and secrecy regarding their dissolute lives. The 30th of June, 1395, the provost of Paris forbade all *filles et femmes de joie* "to appear in the *bordeaux* or *clapiers* after the curfew had sounded, on pain of prison and an arbitrary fine." Delamare, who reports this ordinance after the *Livre Rouge Ancien* of the Châtelet, adds a detail which he has verified in the provost's records: "The ordinances were reenacted twice every year, and the hour of retreat was fixed at six in winter and seven in summer, which is the hour when curfew is sounded."

Such was the force of custom, such was the sway of habit in the good old days that it took several centuries to rescue from Prostitution one of the streets which Louis IX had especially devoted to it. When the ordinance of the provost of Paris of the 18th of September, 1367, had once more confirmed the purpose of these disrespectable streets, the Bishop of Mâcon addressed representations to the King, Charles V, seeking to have the rue Chapon rescued from its obscene destiny. The bishops, counts of Châlon, had possessed for a number of centuries a large *hôtel*, situated in the rue Transnonian, called then Troussonain, between the rues Chapon and Court-au-vilain, now the rue de Montmorency. The women of evil life had taken possession of all the streets, but they assembled every day in their asylum in the rue Chapon, and there, their songs, their laughter, their altercations, their indecencies, incessantly disturbed the eyes, ears and consciences of the pious inhabitants of the *hôtel* Châlons. The Bishop, who was a member of the King's privy council, employed all the prestige he possessed to remove from the neighborhood of his dwelling, and at the same time, from that of the cemetery of Saint-Nicolas-des-Champs his odious neighbors, who were an insult at once to the living and to the dead. Charles V enacted an ordinance, dated the 3rd of February, 1368, (new style, 1369), in which he put back into effect the former edict of St. Louis against Prostitution in general. In order not to carry this decree too far, but merely to apply it to the rue Chapon, he drew certain conclusions from the prohibitive ordinance of 1254 which were neither accurate nor well intentioned; for after having repealed the old ordinance which expelled from the city (*de villâ*) the public women (*publicae meretrices*), and which confiscated all their goods, even to their cloak and *pélicon*, (*usque ad tunicam vel pelliceam*), he ordered the proprietors and tenants of the rue Chapon who had rented their houses to the *ribaudes*, to put these latter out at once

and to have no dealings with them for the future, under pain of losing their rent for a year, in order, according to the edict, that these vile creatures might no longer continue to find lodgings in the said street, nor continue to hold their assemblies there (*quod ibidem sua lupanaria ulterius de cetero non teneant*); this for the honor of the Bishop and in the interests of respectable persons who dwelt in the neighborhood of this street, or even in the street itself, where traffic was no longer safe. The ordinance appears to attribute to the name of the street, Chapon, an origin which gives the lie to the most ancient titles (*saltem metu tene dictus vicus*). Sauval affirms that the public women resisted the King's orders by falling back upon their privileges which had been conferred by St. Louis, and by proving that the rue Chapon had been ceded to them as a place of asylum by Philip-Augustus, before this street had been included within the limits of Paris. The bishops of Châlons well might plead the authority of the ordinance of Charles V, in the attempt to rid themselves of their scandalous neighbors; they did not succeed, so much authority still adhered to St. Louis' legislation, and so powerful was custom in the municipal administration. "The *ribaudes* won out," says Sauval, "and they did not leave the rue Chapon until 1565, when these asylums of public women at Paris were overthrown from top to bottom."

The ordinances of the kings, it is true, were no better carried out when they endeavored to oppose the invasion by Prostitution of those streets of Paris on which this plague had not been inflicted by right of antiquity. Once the public women had invaded a street or quarter, they took root there and multiplied, so that it was impossible to drive them out, despite all the threats of fine and prison. They possessed, it is to be seen, an invincible repugnance to those places which had been assigned to them, and which, undoubtedly, conferred upon them a special brand of infamy; they preferred to expose themselves to the rigors of the law, and to practice their trade in secret in streets where the eye of the police was not always upon them. In 1381, Charles VI invoked execution of the ordinances of St. Louis against those who rented their houses or lodgings to women of evil life in certain streets which these women had taken possession of, but which were not included among their places of asylum. Charles VI addressed letters-patent of the 3rd of August to the provost of Paris, in which he charged the latter to execute the letter of the law; he unreasonably relied upon the ancient ordinances of St. Louis, which drove from the

city and the fields (*tam de campis quam de villis*) the women of dissolute life, and which absolutely prohibited Prostitution; but in the name of these ordinances, he demanded only the expulsion of prostitutes who had chosen a domicile in the rues Beaubourg, Geoffroy-l'Angevin, des Jongleurs, Simon-le-Franc, as well as in the environs of Saint-Denis-de-la-Châtre and the fontaine Maubué. As in the edict of Charles V, the proprietors and tenants of these streets and squares, which it was desired to rid of their inconvenient guests, were directed not to enter into any rental contract with suspect women, under pain of having to pay a year's rent to the bailiff of the place or to the judge of the Châtelet. There is ground for believing that the provost of Paris was at first diligent in his endeavor to see that the orders of the King were obeyed; certain proprietors were fined and certain women were expelled and imprisoned; but despite the sergeants, Prostitution kept the new territory which it had conquered. All the streets, except the cloister of Saint-Denis-de-la-Châtre, had been a part of the hamlet of Beaubourg, which Philip-Augustus had joined to the city by surrounding it with walls; this Beaubourg was, then, naturally occupied by *ribaudes*, who perpetuated themselves there by tradition. The fontaine Maubué, surrounded by wretched hovels, was the center of this *ribaudie*, advertised well enough by the very name of this fountain *Maubué*, *malpropre*, ill-washed). The establishment of *ribaudes* in the neighborhood of Saint-Denis-de-la-Châtre in the Cité dates back to an antiquity still more remote, for we have already shown that the sorority of the Magdalen had its first seat in this parish; it was, then, quite natural for the *joyeuses commères* who composed this sorority to group themselves about their patron's church and to look upon this quarter as the ancient stronghold of their corporation.

The provost of Paris, in publishing the letters patent of the 3rd of August, 1381, destined to protect the respectability (*l'honêteté*) of certain streets, might have recalled at the same time, that other streets had been especially set aside for Prostitution; but from fear of contradicting some ordinance of the king, such as the one which had endeavored to rehabilitate the rue Chapon, he avoided designating these streets, he forbade disrespectable women "to keep themselves, find lodgings or dwell in the worthy streets of Paris, but that they should take themselves and their goods out of the said streets and go to dwell in brothels and in streets and places for them ordained, under pain of banishment." This advice, which Ducange has drawn

from the *Livre Vert Nouveau* of the Châtelet, was silent regarding those places which the provost's office nominally assigned as the market-place of debauchery; and the prostitutes took advantage of this silence to spread themselves through all the quarters of Paris, and to set up there a multitude of infamous resorts. The provost found need of explaining the ambiguous decree of 1381 by a new edict, more explicit, which Ducange, in his *Glossary* (on the word *gynaeceum*), reports under date of 1395 as taken from the *Livre Noir* of the Châtelet: "Item, all public women known as *bordelières* and of dissolute life at present dwelling in the notable streets of Paris are enjoined and commanded . . ., that they vacate them immediately after this present cry, and that they withdraw, and that they make their dwellings in the brothels and other public places for them ordained from antiquity, there to set up their little shops of sin aforesaid, that is to say, in the rues des l'Abreuvoir, de Matcon, de Glatigny, de Tiron, de Cour Robert de Paris, Baillehoé, la rue Chapon and la rue Palée, under pain of being cast into prison and an arbitrary fine." This *cri*, or proclamation, which was made to the sound of the trumpet, by sworn criers, in the public squares of Paris, exhibits this singularity, that it displays no regard for the ordinance of the king relative to the rue Chapon; possibly, a decree of Parliament had suspended this latter ordinance. Among the places reputed infamous, one finds no longer the rue de Champ-Fleury, but one sees it had been replaced by the rue Palée, which was afterwards named the rue de Saint-Julien and later the rue de la Poterne or Fausse-Poterne, for the reason that it was but a little distance from there to the postern (*poterne*) Saint-Nicolas-Huidelon. This street, which runs into the rue Beaubourg, and which today is called the rue du Maure, contained a court of ribaldry known as la Cour du More, a name which we would associate with certain women who must have been Moors or Saracens, inasmuch as the *taille* of 1292 describes them as *Morelles*. This was one of the principal resorts of Prostitution, since for our part, we would not look for this rue Palée in the rue du Petit-Hurleur, where Geraud, Jaillot and Lebeuf have endeavored to place it. The great rue Palée (there were two of this name) was, in our opinion, the place of asylum for the women of the rue Beaubourg and the neighboring streets.

There were also in Paris a number of unauthorized bad-houses; but it would appear that the provost neglected to concern himself with them down to the year 1365, when Charles V included them

in one general prohibition. But previous to this latter measure, we might cite two attempts at reform in the matter of streets, one of which belonged traditionally to Prostitution, while the other had been infected with it at a much later period. An ordinance of Charles VI, of the 14th of September, 1420, during the occupation of Paris by the English, renewed the old edicts prohibiting dissolute women from lodging elsewhere than in the rues de l'Abreuvoir-Mâcon, de Glatigny, de Tyron, la Cour Robert-de-Paris, Baillehoé, and the rue Paleé, under pain of prison. (Delamare reads *rue Pavée* in the *Register Noir* of the Châtelet, from which he copies this document.) But four years later, Charles VI being dead, Henry VI, King of England, who called himself King of France, lent an ear to the supplications of the church wardens and parishioners of the Church of Saint-Merry, who demanded the suppression of the shameful franchises of the rue de Baillehoé, "in which place of Baillehoé, says the letters patent of Henry VI, dated in the month of April, 1424, and delivered at Paris in the council of the King, "are to be found continually, women of dissolute life and common ones called *bordelières*, who keep *clapier* and public *bordel*: which is a very unseemly thing and not consonant with the honor which should be paid to the Church by every good Catholic; it is a bad example, vile and abominable, especially to worthy folk, honorable and of good life." As a consequence, in order to satisfy the complainants and their wives, who were scandalized at the spectacle of such immodesties, the English King forbade "that there shall be hereafter any prostitute in the rue de Baillehoé, nor in the neighborhood of the church of Saint-Merry, seeing that there are in the city many other places ordained for them, and especially near to this place, such as the place which is called the Cour Robert, and elsewhere, further from the church, to which should retreat the said women, who are not inhabitants."

It was enjoined on the provost of Paris to execute this *irrevocable* decree, and to expel at once the fallen women who lodged in the rue Baillehoé. It is probable that this ordinance was no more effective than its predecessors, for the rue Baillehoé remained devoted to vice. We remark, however, in the letters of Henry VI, that the tolerated places were *comme non habites*; whereas the proclamation of the provost of Paris, made *à cor et à cri* in 1395, orders prostitutes to *make their dwelling* in those same places, which had been assigned to them from *antiquity*. We conclude from these two documents, which are

almost contemporaries, that legislation relative to women of evil life had changed on this point; that fallen women had been forced to find lodgings upon the very scene of their excesses, and that they no longer possessed the right to find domicile in all quarters, so long as they lived there respectably. Another result of the ordinance of Henry VI was that, notwithstanding reiterated injunctions, the dissolute women refused to collect in the *bordeaux* and *clapiers*, which remained deserted and abandoned. A decree of Parliament of the 14th of July, 1480, cited by Sauval, shows us with what obstinacy this species of women fled the places which had been reserved for their dishonorable trade, in order to hurl themselves like harpies upon the other streets, which they defiled with their debaucheries. This decree orders that women of indecent life be dislodged from the rue de Cannettes and from the other neighboring streets, and enjoins these women "to go dwell in the ancient *bordeaux*" (*Antiquités de Paris*, Volume III, page 652). We cannot doubt, from the terms of this decree, that the provost of Paris had recognized the necessity of identifying the lodgings of public women with the places where they practiced their trade, and that the tolerated places had become in this manner the permanent dwellings of these women, who in the beginning had only come there at certain hours of the day, and who never remained all night.

We must now seek to discover in the topography of old Paris those streets which had been conquered by vagabond Prostitution, and which yet the ordinances of the kings, the decrees of Parliament and the *amendments* of the provost do not nominally designate. These streets, where was practiced in secret the culpable industry of the *putes*, were sufficiently numerous, while the obscene names which they owed to popular malice marked them out for the reprobation of respectable folk, who avoided them with prudence. In addition to the Courts of Miracles, which engulfed in the same mire robbers and prostitutes of the lowest class, there might readily have been found a score of streets quite as ill-famed as those which St. Louis had given over entirely to public debauchery. We have remarked above that these streets were ordinarily near a center of Prostitution. Thus, the rue Transnonain depended, so to speak, on the rue Chapon; the rue Bourg-l'Abbé on the rue du Hueleu; the rue Cocatrix on the rue Glatigny. From the earliest times, the prostitutes had chosen their residences near the place of their *assemblées*, in order that they might be able to repair there at any hour without being exposed to the hoots

and insults of the populace. The rue Bourg-l'Abbé, which had been opened beyond the walls of Philip-Augustus, on the premises of the Abbey Saint-Martin-des-Champs, shared in the bad reputation of the street, or rather of the cul-de-sac de Hueleu, which formed the entrance of the present rue du Grand-Hurleur. Sauval, (Volume I, page 120), reports a proverbial locution which enables us to make the acquaintance of the inhabitants of this street: "There is the tribe of the rue Bourg-l'Abbé; they demand nothing but love and simplicity." As to the rue de Hueleu, exclusively reserved for Prostitution from its origin to our day, it did not owe its name, as the Abbé Lebeuf says, to a knight named Hugo Lupus (in old French, *Hue-Leu*, who lived in the twelfth century and who made many donations to the church of Saint Magloire, but rather to the hoots which accompanied those simple or credulous ones whom chance led into this infamous place. This etymology, conformable to the spirit in which the streets of Paris were christened, is confirmed by the name of *Innocents*, which the street bore about the same period; it was also called the rue du Pet. It was afterward given the name of Grand-Hueleu, to distinguish it from the rue du Petit-Hueleu, its neighbor, which had been at first the Petite rue Palée, and which deserved to be compared later to the Hueleu with respect to its shameful destiny: "As soon as a man was seen entering one or the other of these streets," say the authors of the *Dictionnaire Historique de la Ville de Paris*, "one readily divined what led him there, and one said to the children; *Hue-le*, that is to say, cry after him, mock him!" However this may be, of all the brothels of Paris, that of Hueleu was the one which preserved the most horrible renown; it was the one which especially determined the severe measures of repression which Charles IX extended to cover all the bad-houses of his capital. One might, with good authority, sustain the thesis that the children were in the habit of crying *au loup* and, by corruption, *houloulou*, when a man accosted a debauched woman in the street, or when one of these poor wretches dared show herself in the light of day in the costume of her calling.

The streets which led to the rue Chapon were not any better populated. The rue Transnonain had long served as an excuse for gross word-plays on the part of the people, who called it sometimes Trousse-Nonain or Tasse-Nonain and sometimes Trotte-Putain and Tas-de-Putain. The rue Ferpillon, in which name some have thought to find that of one of its former inhabitants, was first called Serpillon,

an old word which corresponds to *torchon* (dishcloth). The rue de Montmorency, where the lords of Montmorency had formerly had a dwelling with considerable dependencies, was known under the name of Cour au Vilain, on account of a sort of Court of Miracles which it contained. The majority of the streets situated beyond the walls or along the ramparts constructed by Philip-Augustus had turned to vagabond Prostitution, and prostitutes there braved in peace the ordinances of the provosts and the sergeants of the Châtelet. Thus, the rue des Deux-Portes, the rue Beaurepaire, the rue Renard, the rue du Lion-Saint-Sauveur, and the rue Tireboudin belonged by right to prostitutes of the lowest degree. The rue des Deux-Portes, which took its name from the two gates, closed during the night, had inevitably become a place of debauchery, of which we have sufficient proof in the soubriquet of *Gratec* . . . , which it bore down to the fifteenth century. It is by this obscene name that it is designated in a list of the streets of Paris published by the Abbé Lebeuf from an old manuscript from the Abbey of Sainte-Geneviève (*Hist. de La Ville et du Diocèse de Paris*, Volume II, page 603). In the *Compte* of the domain of Paris for the year 1421 (Sauval, Volume III., page 273), the receiver of the city states that he has received from Jean Jumault "the rents of a house, court and stables, as well as all that it includes, situated at Paris in the rue Gratec . . . , near Tirev . . . , where hangs the sign of the *Escu* of Burgundy, being a quit-rent of the king." The rue Tirev . . . , referred to in this *Compte*, preserved its infamous name down to the sixteenth century, when Queen Mary Stuart, wife of Francis I, passing that way, demanded to know the name of that street of one of her officers, which led to a change of its primitive name. Whatever we may think of this anecdote, which Saint-Foix asserts he has borrowed from local tradition, the strange idea was conceived, in 1809, of inscribing the name of Mary Stuart on the signboard of the rue Tireboudin.

The names of streets, invented and corrupted by the people, who delighted in the most indecent equivocations, are in themselves almost sufficient to reveal for us the traces of public and secret Prostitution in old Paris. Without leaving the new quarters which composed the Ville, and which spread out to the north of the Cité on the right bank of the Seine, on either side of the walls of Philip-Augustus, we find in the old inventories, the rues de la Truanderie, du Puits-d'Amour, de Poilec . . . , de Merderel, de Putigneuse, de Pute y musse, etc.

These names in themselves indicate the character of the streets which bore them. The Truanderie, the only one which has preserved its name through more than six centuries, offered an asylum not only to wandering prostitutes, but also to beggars, thieves, and vagabonds, in a word to *truands* (vagrants). The rue du Puits-d'Amour, which is now the rue de la Petite-Truanderie, had a celebrated well, of which we have already spoken, and which was well known to amorous ladies: this well, the memory of which is bound up with a number of chronicles of love, existed in the center of the little place de l'Ariane, the primitive name of which appears to have been *Place de la Roynne*, possibly named after a queen of ribaldry or of love, consecrated with the water of this well. The rue de Poilec . . . , which is still recognizable under its modern name of rue du Pélican, prudently but clumsily metamorphosed into the rue Pourgée at the beginning of the revolution—this villainous street has never changed its occupation, and one still finds the same manners there. The rue Merderel, Merderet or Merderiau, has been cleaned up somewhat since it was made into the rue Verderet, then Verdelet, but it still keeps to its old customs, and Prostitution promenades there, as in the old days, through mud and filth. The rue *Puitigneuse*, in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, is at present the rue Geoffroy-Senier, the rue Pute-y-Musse (that is to say, a *girl hides there*) has taken on a respectable air in becoming the rue de Petit-Musc. Guillot indicates in his itinerary another rue de Pute-y-Musse, or Pute-Musse, which the Abbé Lebeuf thought he recognized in the rue Cloche-Perce or de la Cloche-Percée. There is no need to say that these streets, haunted by women of evil life and their obscene satellites, were remarkable, among other things, for their filth and stench; it is in this ignominious state that they appeared to us still in the middle of the seventeenth century, when the *commissaires* made an inquiry concerning public health in the streets of the Capital, and discovered in the majority of those streets occupied by the *bordelières*, the presence of infectious sewers which poisoned the air and of hideous hags who afflicted the gaze as much as they did the sense of smell. Prostitution, as one may judge from this, did not pride itself upon the delicacy of its sensual accompaniments; on this score, it was to receive an inspiration later from the example of a gallant and voluptuous court.

CHAPTER LI

WE HAVE seen that the Provost of Paris, by his ordinance of 1360, had forbidden girls and women of evil life, under pain of confiscation and a fine, to wear upon their robes or their hoods "any embroideries, boutonnières of silver, white or gilded, or pearls, or mantles lined with grey." This ordinance, the most ancient that we know relative to the policing of French prostitutes, had certainly been preceded by others which have not been preserved in the archives of the Châtelet of Paris. Philip-Augustus was the first King to concern himself with luxurious apparel, or rather the first who, under pretext of reforming costume in the interest of the public welfare, endeavored to render costume subservient to the establishment of the social hierarchy, in accordance with birth, rank and fortune. We may, then, suppose that, from the time of the first regulation of Philip-Augustus, concerning raiment, materials and jewels, the prostitutes had found themselves deprived of the privilege of going clad as *dames and châtelaines* (that is, as ladies); but if there remains to us but a memory of the laws of Philip-Augustus, those of Philip the Handsome, which were undoubtedly but the repetition and confirmation of preceding ones, have not met with the same fate; and we may date from 1294 the legislation of the kings of France against *dissoluteness* and *superfluity* of vestments. In this ordinance of 1294, there is undoubtedly no question of public women and their *liveries*; but we may assume that the latter were not any more privileged than the bourgeois and the bourgeoisie, who might no longer wear either vair or grey or ermine or gold, or precious stones, or crowns of gold or silver, being required to relinquish (*se de livérer*) in the course of the year the furs and jewels which they had acquired prior to the ordinance. The execution of such an ordinance was not an easy thing, and among the most obstinate cases of disobedience to be met with was that of the queens of ribaldry (*reines de ribaudie*), who did not fail to insist that an edict respecting the women of the bourgeoisie did not concern them, and that the King of France should not have attempted to dishonor them by forcing them to wear nothing but robes worth 12 sous the ell.

The ordinance of Philip the Handsome was the point of departure

for all ordinances of the same sort, which merely reenacted and completed it, by adding certain prescriptions which varied with modes and usages. A number of these ordinances must have been published before the one of 1367, which, destined only for the inhabitants of Montpellier, especially for the women of that city, is full of minute details regarding the form of garments and the quality of material. It is hard not to believe that many regulations, quite as detailed, had been applied to the women of Paris in the long space of time which elapsed between the first edict of 1294 and that of 1367, which only had the force of law in the city of Montpellier. We do not find, however, any but the proclamation of the provost of Paris, dated 1360, which we have cited, and of which common women were the object. There were, certainly, other similar proclamations, not counting the one which referred exclusively to gilded girdles, a point indubitably established by tradition, although the original text has not come down to us. This text, moreover, was but an explanatory paraphrase of an article in the ordinance of Philip the Handsome. But there is ground for believing that the public women of Paris were not very docile with respect to the provost's orders, and that they may even have revolted openly against the latter's agents, charged with the execution of the law; for we see, in the course of the fifteenth century, the prohibitions which the provost had addressed to his humble subjects, and which Parliament did not fail to corroborate, reappearing upon many occasions, and always with an excess of severity. By the ordinance of the 8th of January, 1415, wholly relative to Prostitution, the provost once more forbade all dissolute women to be so bold as to wear, in Paris or elsewhere, gold or silver upon their robes and hoods, bouttonnières of silver, white or gilded, pearls, golden or gilded girdles, habits lined in grey, vair, squirrel or other *respectable* furs, or buckles of silver upon their slippers, under pain of confiscation and an arbitrary fine. They were given eight days in which to abandon these ornaments; after which it was enjoined upon the sergeants who found an infraction to arrest the guilty parties in whatever place they might be found, except in the churches, and to lead them to prison in the Châtelet, in order that, their costumes having been taken away and confiscated, they might be punished according to the exigencies of the case. This ordinance was renewed and cried to the sound of the trumpet in the streets and carrefours of Paris, in 1419, which goes to prove that it had not been

any too well observed by the parties interested, and that the persistence of the rebels had discouraged the efforts of the sergeants.

Parliament, despite civil war, pestilence and famine, which were then desolating the Capital and a number of provinces of the realm, regarded this question as sufficiently important, in so far as it related to girls and women of evil life, to render a decree on the 26th of June, 1420, by which certain further prohibitions were imposed upon the indecent ones: "to wear robes with collars reversed and with a trailing train, nor any fur of any value whatsoever, gilded girdles, kerchiefs for the head, nor boutonnières in their hoods;" and this under pain of prison, of confiscation and arbitrary fine, after a delay of eight days given the guilty ones in which to conform to the law. The decree of Parliament met with no more obedience from the *ribaudes* than had the ordinance of the provost of Paris; and it was necessary for this latter, five years later to proclaim once more those orders which it was his duty to enforce; but the new efforts met with as little success as the old. The *damoiselles* of prostitution did not care to renounce their toilet accessories, and they constantly eluded the ordinance, by modifying some little thing in connection with fashion, and by going the women of good life one step better in the matter of luxury.

It would appear that the seizure of forbidden jewels and habits still constituted, at this period, a sufficiently good *aubaine*, since the provost of Paris appropriated it as one of the revenues of his office; but Henry VI, King of England, who was master of Paris in 1424, declined to permit these venal profits to be sidetracked from the coffers of the King, and by an ordinance dated the month of May of that year, he enjoins the provost "that hereafter he shall not take or apply to his profit, the girdles, jewels, habits, garments or adornments forbidden to girls and amorous or dissolute women." (See the *Ordonn. des rois* of the 3-d Race.)

A new degree of Parliament of the 17th of April, 1426, prohibited "the ornaments which damoiselles wear," trailing robes, reversed collars, cloth of scarlet in robes or in hoods, furs of petit-gris and other "rich furs" *soit en colets, poignets, porfils ou autrement*. The same decree forbade them also "to wear any boutonnières in their hoods, girdles and tissue of silk or furs of gold or silver, which are the ornaments of women of honor." These reiterated decrees prove the obstinacy of the public women in their infraction of the ordinances; they would not admit that they should be subjected, like the *petites*

bourgeoises, to a legislation which became more and more rigorous as luxury increased, and as fashion incessantly tended to set up its frivolous reign in all classes of society. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, especially, the kings of France, who themselves set the example of an excessive prodigality in toilet expenses, still forbade, under the severest penalties, everything which appeared to tend to a dissoluteness of garments; they did not even permit the *gentilshommes* and the *dames* of their household the use of certain stuffs reserved for princes and princesses; they prohibited for *toutes manières de gens* the use of certain embroideries, certain *passemens* in gold or silver, in velours and in silk; but the women of pleasure, who called themselves the queens and princesses of love, took no notice of these edicts, and continued to wear, in their privileged streets, all these forbidden superfluities. It may be supposed that they did not adventure into the respectable streets in such attire, which would have caused them to be remarked at once, and which would certainly have aroused against them the indignation of the passers-by. We have said that the people were by no means sympathetic to them, and that the *ribaudes*, as they passed by, were often insulted; mud was thrown on them, and they were even attacked.

It became necessary, from time to time, to satisfy the popular vindictiveness by punishing one of these brazen women who thus defied the laws. On such occasions, some of these poor wretches whom public opinion had denounced as professional prostitutes, and who had been found wearing prohibited articles, were arrested in the open street. These arrests never affected the guiltiest ones, who, being the best off, always had enough in their pockets to impair the eyesight of the sergeants, even though the latter had met them in all their *pompe*, as one would have remarked at that time; there were even those among them who provided these easy-going sergeants with a monthly or weekly income in order not to be disturbed, whatever might be their accoutrements and ornaments. Those who were led away to prison and who lost their goods had frequently but paltry trifles upon their bodies and did not even leave enough behind them in the Châtelet to pay the honorariums of the sergeants. Thus, Sauval and Delamare, have drawn from the *Comptes* of the district of Paris a number of curious articles which show us the poverty of the ordinary victims of the Châtelet. The extract of the *Ordinaire de Paris*, in the

chapter on *Forfaitures, Espaves et Aubaines*, for the year 1428, deserves to be reported as Sauval has it in his *Antiquités de Paris*: "Of the value and sale of a greatcoat of blue cloth, lined at the neck in *penne de gris*, in which Jehannette, widow of the late Pierre Michel, a *femme amoureuse*, was found clad, as well as in a girdle of black silk tissue, buckle, *mordant* and eight studs of silver, weighing in all two ounces and a half; in which state she was found going into the city, in violation of the ordinance and prohibition in this matter, and for which she was imprisoned, the said robe and girdle to belong to the King, by confiscation, in pursuance of the said ordinance, and was delivered *en plein marché* the 10th day of July, 1427; the said robe being of the price of 7 pounds, 12 Parisian sous, of which the sergeants who imprisoned her had the fourth for themselves; for the surplus, etc.—"Of the value of another girdle of black silk, on which there were *platine* and eight studs of silver, buckle and *mordant* of white steel, found in the possession of Jehannette la Neufville, for this imprisoned," etc.—Of the value of another girdle adorned with buckle and *mordant* upon black silk with eight studs of silver, and a collar of *penne de gris*, found in the possession of Jehannette la Fleurie, called la Poissonnière (the Fishmonger), for this imprisoned," etc.

We remark, in this extract, a number of circumstances interesting as details of manners. They arrested and imprisoned only those women who were found upon the public highway with habits which they ought not to wear; from which it resulted that the latter were free to clothe themselves as they pleased in the interior of their houses, and even within the confines of those places devoted to the practice of their scandalous trade. The *femmes amoureuses*, whom the police of the Châtelet did not hold to any preliminary declaration, and who in this manner evaded the ignominy of their state, might, by their birth and civil status, keep up bourgeois appearance and hide their true profession until an unfortunate mischance would occur to betray the secret of their shameful existence. Thus, Jehannette, widow of Pierre Michel, possessed no descriptive name which would cause us to recognize the scandalousness of her conduct; Jehannette la Neufville bore a name notable among the good bourgeois of Paris; as to Jehannette la Fleurie, or la Poissonnière, she had two soubriquets, and the last appeared to indicate that she devoted her attention alternately to Prostitution and to the sale of fish. We have, moreover, in a preceding chapter determined the point that the actual quarter

where the rues Poissonnière and Montergueil crossed each other, was entirely occupied by the inhabitants of the Courts of Miracles and by the clientele of foreign debauchery. We shall add that the fish-merchants, who had need to be present when the tide came in, found lodgings first on the road called *Val Larroneux*, which became then *le chemin et rue des Poissonniers* and *des Poissonnières*. We may divine all the motives which led to the nickname of *Poissonnière* being given to an amorous woman who frequented the fish-market and who was surrounded by fish merchants. The name of *Jehannette* was not, as M. Rabutaux thinks, a common and generic designation for a daughter of joy. Let us not forget to remark also that those objects contrary to the ordinance which had been found in the possession of amorous women were put in the same class with objects which had been lost upon the public highway, and which belonged to the government when they had not been claimed in due time; after a delay of forty days, both classes of articles were sold *en plein marché*, and the product of the sale, which was small enough, was divided between the king, the city and the sergeants, under the title of "strays" (*épaves*).

Sauval has not analyzed all the sales of this species, a record of which is to be found in the *Comptes* of the Ordinary of Paris, but he notes them, and it is to be seen that they were very rare, since Sauval mentions a number of years in which not a single one occurred, at least on the books of the provost's office. The *Compte* of 1446 contains this article: "Sale of a small girdle, buckle, *mordant* and four little studs of silver found in the possession of Guionne la Frogière, amorous woman, declared to belong to the King by confiscation, etc." It was especially on girdles of silver or those ornamented with silver that the sergeant made war. The fines due to the illegal wearing of these girdles are registered in the *Comptes* of the years 1454, 1457, 1460, 1461, and 1464. After this last date, the prosecution appears to relent, and it may readily be believed that these girdles have been put out of court. The extract from the chapter on the *Forfaitures* of 1457 runs thus: "Many girdles for the use of women, adorned with buckle, *mordant* and studs of silver, declared to belong to the King, having been confiscated from a number of amorous women who wore the said girdles in Paris contrary to the ordinances in this matter." In the *Comptes* of 1459 we come upon the inventory of the defrocking of two amorous women, who, each of them, bore a noble name, but who were quite differently clad. The dilapidated costume of the first

spoke clearly enough of the misery or vice which had caused her fall, her charms of person not being sufficient to procure her the means of getting on her feet again; for she must have been old and ugly to have been arrested in such attire: "A short robe of gray cloth over brown silk material, lined with white fur, well worn, with old stockings, pieced out with violet cloth, and a fustian doublet, in which Marguerite, wife of Pierre de Rains, had been found clad, declared to belong to the King, etc." We are quite surprised at encountering an amorous woman with doublet and stockings, as though she desired to pass, at need, for a man. The second delinquent, who undoubtedly had been arrested upon leaving the church, as a result of popular denunciation, meant a better aubaine for the sergeants who led her to the Châtelet: "A girdle, adorned with a buckle, *mordant*, and studs of gilded silver, weighing two ounces and a half, with a *surceinct* (very large double girdle), also adorned with a buckle, *mordant*, and studs of gilded silver, a *Pater noster* (rosary) of coral, and an *Agnus Dei* of silver and a *livre d'heures*, which, with a gilded clasp, and a collar of satin lined in *menu-vair*, have come to our sire the King, by confiscation from the damoiselle Laurence de Villers, amorous woman, constituted prisoner for the wearing of such, etc." Here indeed we have a noble damoiselle who is described as an *amorous woman*, and who forfeits to the King the objects of luxury which she did not have the right to wear upon her person, even in a place of devotion. This Laurence de Villers knew how to read, since she went to church with a *livre d'heures*, which must have been an exception among the women of evil life. In the *Compte* of 1460, the fines for the wearing of habits and girdles in contravention of the law appear to have been more numerous, but these fines, as usual, are not of great profit to the king, the city, or the sergeants. Here we have "a robe of gray cloth turned back, doubled as a blanket, in which Jehanne la Paillarde (the lecheress), an amorous woman, had been found clad and for this imprisoned;" for the bourgeoisie ladies themselves did not have the right to double back their robes or to trim them with silk. Here we have a "girdle belonging to Agnès la Petite, who, although she is married, is of dissolute life, and has been many times arrested, which girdle she has been found wearing throughout Paris." This last quotation proves, in accordance with the theory we have advanced, that married women frequently practiced the profession of prostitute. The wearing of girdles being at this period the object of a special prosecution,

we may assume that a particular ordinance had led to this renewed zeal which led inevitably to the imprisonment of a number of prostitutes who had been arrested for violation of the law.

Women of this sort were incorrigible, where their toilet was concerned; they had all, more or less, a passion for jewelry, and they did not fear exposing themselves to prison or a fine to satisfy this passion for wearing a gold or silver trinket or even one of tinfoil. It was not that they desired by doing so to disguise their dishonorable profession and to be confused with dames and damoiselles. They did not revolt against the spirit of the enactments, the object of which was to remedy the confusion of social classes between "*men and women of all conditions, who,*" says an ordinance of Henri II, "*as a result, cannot be singled out or discerned one from another.*" The professional *ribaudes*, on the contrary, did not care to pretend to pass for what they were not, but they took pleasure in adorning themselves and *bedizening themselves out*, in order to attract glances and to vie with one another in magnificence. Since necklaces, bracelets and rings, were forbidden them, they made up for this prohibition by wearing holy jewels, chaplets of goldsmith-work, medals, crosses and blessed rings; the sergeants, however, were not all devout enough to blink these pious infractions, but would wait for the delinquents at the doors of churches, to lead them away to the Châtelet amid the hoots of the populace. It would appear that Louis XI, who on his own account greatly abused the use of medals, chaplets and the *Agnus Dei*, manifested an excessive severity toward amorous women found wearing these same objects; not only were the jewels, which their religious character failed to save from the law, confiscated for the profit of the King, but the woman who wore them was condemned to a fine. In 1463, Jehanneton du Buisson was condemned, "*in the amount of 15 sous 4 Parisian deniers*" (about 25 francs in our money) for the illegal wearing of two vermilion *paternostres*. Louis XI caused to be punished with an equal rigor those *ribaudes* who had been found wearing men's clothes in the streets of Paris; we read in the chapter on *Forfaitures et Espaves* of the Ordinary of Paris in 1471: "Of the sale of a black-belted robe, for the use of a man, a hat and a *cornette* (headdress), in which Jehanne la Thibaude was found clad and seized, and in this state led away prisoner to the Châtelet of Paris, the 21st of May last; declared acquired and confiscated for the King." We do not dare to hazard a conjecture on the subject of this masculine

disguise, which seems to have had, at least sometimes, an indecent purpose in connection with the acts of Prostitution.

In addition to the *ribaudes*, there were always the agents of debauchery who, despite the terrible threats of legislators, continued tranquilly enough to pursue their infamous commerce; they were rarely prosecuted and still more rarely brought to judgment and condemned. Ordinarily, when the complaints of their neighbors or their victims had made necessary a public demonstration of severity, they were arrested and imprisoned, but everything ended in a money settlement, in a confiscation of goods or in banishment. In many cases, the guilty one went scot free after the payment of a heavy fine, which was soon made up by the fruits of his *maquerellage*. Those, male and female, who kept brothels, and who rented the "little shops of sin", who ruled over a *clapier* of public women, who lent the latter at usury, either silver or furniture or goods—those, in a word, who lived at the expense of legal Prostitution, were tolerated, if not protected; and in their ignoble trade of middle-man was seen a salutary influence in the regulation of debauchery. The women devoted to this hideous employment had need of an authority which would prescribe for them a rule of conduct, and which would keep them under constant surveillance; they were not restrained, therefore, from having a *ribaud* for governor or a *ribaude* for governess. These chiefs of ribaldry generally assumed a decent name and a mask of honesty; sometimes they were porters, sometimes chambermaids, sometimes inn-keepers, sometimes foreign merchants; but always, men or women, they were persons of advanced age, even of a respectable old age, of austere mien, of grave speech and solemn air, which did not prevent the worthy person in question, however, from being constantly exposed to such little misadventures as prison, the lash, the pillory and exile, in accordance with the traditions of the Roman law. The French law provided the death penalty for "confessed pimps" (*maquereaux avérés*); but this penalty was almost never inflicted, although it remained as a bugbear in the criminal code. Otherwise, the opinion of juriconsults has not varied regarding a crime which did not meet with the same tolerance from the moral point of view that it did in the application of the law. "*Macquereaux* and *macquerelles*," says the celebrated Jossé de Damhoudère, in his *Pratique Judiciaire des Causes Criminelles*, which served as a formula for magistrates of the sixteenth century, "*macquereaux* and *macquerelles*, who cause modest

and respectable women to stumble are, by law, punished corporally, and, by custom, with banishment or other arbitrary punishment, according to the various countries and cities."

The old criminologists merely repeat themselves upon this point and agree that the penalty has been left in the law as a useful precaution against excesses of libertinism, by providing for debauchery's most audacious agents a legal barrier. The learned Jean Duret, in his *Traité des Peines et Amendes* (edition of Lyons, 1583, in-8, fol. 105), is as explicit as J. de Damhoudère in this regard; "Those who rent and take houses to practice *maquerellage* lose their right of property and are condemned to 10 pounds in gold by way of fine. In fact, they are commonly punished, according to the penalties ordained by law, capitally and by death." One might cite more than one example of capital punishment inflicted upon the guilty of either sex, by reason of special circumstances surrounding their particular crime. Thus, Duret adds this paragraph, which informs us in what cases the death penalty was required against the instigators to debauchery: "For the father, mother, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, tutor or guardian who gives thus his daughter, relative or minor, or who through *maquerellage* leads them into adultery, death is the only sufficient penalty. Servants and nurses of such a sort must lose their lives." Another jurisconsult of the same epoch, Claude Lebrun de la Rochette, in his practical treatise entitled *Les Procez Civil et Criminel* (edition of 1647, in-4), devotes an entire chapter to establishing the different degrees of *maquerellage*, and concludes that lechery (*paillardise*), daughter of idleness and pimping, produces fornication, adultery, rape, incest and sodomy. "Whether then," he says, "whether these execrable executioners of consciences keep the lecheresses whose curators they are in their houses, or, by allurements, blandishments, promises and artifices, draw them there, or whether they there bring them men, they are in no wise dissimilar from those *qui proprio corpore quaestum faciunt*, as Ulpianus decides in the law *Palam. . § Lenocinium, ff. De ritu nupt. l. athletas, § I, ff. De his qui not. infam.*"

Claude Lebrun de la Rochette goes on to indicate the indulgence of the French tribunals in the matter of *maquerellage*: "And it was anciently," he says, "punished with the extreme penalty, if it was confessed that the *maquereau* was in the habit of suborning girls and women whom he dragged down to perdition; whether they were induced by presents or persuasive words, if by this means, he rendered

them obedient to his will and to that Prostitution which he desired them to commit, in order to derive a gain from such turpitude . . . always, the sovereign courts of the Parliament of this realm, and the lower ones, punished them most mildly, contenting themselves with banishment or with fustigation in the streets of the cities where they kept their *courtages*, and where they had been apprehended." It is our opinion that this tolerance toward procurers was not shown to those who labored to corrupt youth and innocence, but only to the masters and mistresses of bad houses. These latter were distinguished thus from those vile and abominable tempters, who, at the prompting of devils, battered down the breech of modesty and conspired against the honor of the feminine sex: "However well they may avoid divine punishment here," remarked the honest Lebrun de la Rochette, speaking of these corrupters, "they shall not avoid Divinity, which always pays the wicked, with usury, the wages of his wickedness." As to the masters and mistresses of the brothels, they were accorded everywhere a tacit protection, and were employed as intermediary officers in the enforcement of police regulations. It was the old women who were by preference authorized to direct the establishment of debauchery, and who were known as *maquerelles publiques*. Ducange cites a document, dated 1350, which confirms this: *In domo cujusdam maquerellae publicae in villa Valentianis*, etc. It is almost certain that the *maquerelles publiques* existed and practiced their trade under the tolerance of the municipal law.

The ordinances of the kings, the decrees of Parliament and the proclamations of the provost of Paris, had, however on many occasions, branded, prohibited and condemned *maquerellage* in general, without making any reservation, without admitting any mitigating circumstance. In an ordinance of 1367, analyzed by Delamare, the provost of Paris prohibits "all persons of either sex from acting as middle-men in directing women to make a sin of their bodies, under pain of being put in the pillory and being burned (that is to say, marked with a red hot iron), and afterwards driven out of the city." This ordinance, it may be seen, included without distinction those persons who administered a *ribaudie*, composed of *femmes folles de leur corps*. All the ordinances relative to the location of houses touched indirectly on the question of *maquerellage*, and the shameful authors of this *vilainie* might not practice it under the character of proprietor or principal tenant. The provost's ordinance of the 8th of January,

1415, textually reenacted in 1419, while wholly occupied with forbidding debauched women from locating their houses "in respectable streets," also forbids "all persons to meddle with the furnishing of girls or women to make a sin of their bodies, under pain of being put in a pillory, branded with a hot iron and driven out of the city." Such was the most frequent punishment inflicted upon them when these "tools of Satan," as Lebrun de la Rochette calls them, had given rise to some public scandal. They were condemned sometimes to be fustigated and to have their ears cut off; it would seem even that certain *maquerelles* were buried alive. These sentences undoubtedly carried with them in the majority of cases the confiscation and the suppression and demolition of those dwellings which had been the scenes of the crime. Such at least is what we are permitted to suppose from this passage from the *Compte* of the ordinary of Paris for the year 1428: "From Nicolas Sandemer and Isabeau, his wife, from the sale of a place vacated where they used to have their houses, four brothels and edifices at present demolished, situated at Paris, in the Cité, in Glatigny, on the one hand, . . . and on the other hand, constituting the corner of an alley, by which one goes down to the river Seine, near the Grand-Pont." We know that, in accordance with a custom which goes back to the most remote antiquity, a house which had been defiled by a crime was razed and the site was left empty for a lapse of time determined by the sentence, as though to purify the cursed spot.* It is our opinion, moreover, that a house in which there had been for a long time a bad-place was not occupied by respectable folk without being rebuilt.

We shall see, in the following chapter, devoted to assembling the scattered facts of Prostitution in different cities, that the chastisement inflicted on procurers was subject to certain variations according to country. Among the executions which took place at Paris, we do not find a single one in which there is question of a victim described as *maquereau*, but, on the other hand, the *maquerelles* are not lacking. Sauval informs us (Volume II, page 590), that a "maquerelle who swore villainously" (*maquerelle qui joroit vilainement*) in 1301, was

*Translator's Note:—Mr. J. U. Nicolson says: "It is possible that superstition entered into this. See Camille Flammarion's "Haunted Houses" (D. Appleton and Company, 1924) for an exposition of legal recognitions of hauntings, resulting in invalidated leases. This superstition arising out of the crime of murder might easily be extended to include a repugnance against a house in which prostitution had been practiced.

put in the pillory "at the *échelle*" of Saint-Geneviève. There were in Paris from twenty to twenty-five special *justices* with an *échelle* where the *maquereaux* and the *maquerelles* might be lashed, pilloried and cropped.

The bishop of Paris himself, had his *échelle* in the *parvis* of Notre-Dame, and the judgments of the official who performed the function of bailiff to the bishop frequently involved dissolute women, which proves that Prostitution had not been entirely banished from the episcopal jurisdiction. In 1399, the official of the Bishop of Paris, in order to punish a woman who had "received and given retreat to a number of men and women, married and marriageable, and had sent for them by certain messages," condemns her to be "pilloried, her hair burned, banished from the land of the said Bishop, and all her goods confiscated." (See the *Glossary* of Ducange and Carpentier on the word *capilli*.) Another execution of the same sort took place in the *parvis*: A certain Isabelle, who had sold a young girl to a canon of the cathedral, was there exposed and tortured and burned with a flaming torch; after which she was banished forever. But in 1357, this Isabelle obtained letters of remission from the King, probably through the canon, who does not appear to have been prosecuted by the secular arm of the law. The flaming torch, which figures in the punishment of this *courtière* of debauchery, served to "sing" (*flamber*) the victim and to burn off whatever hair she had on her body. Executions of this sort drew more of an audience than all the others. In the *Compte* of the ordinary for the year 1416 (*Antiq. de Paris*, Volume III), we read that the sergeants of the Châtelet bought a dozen new *boulaies* (birch switches) to "part the people" (*faire serrer le peuple*) and "to assist at the justice which was done to *maquerelles* who were led through the streets of Paris, turned, burned and their ears cut off in the pillory." We find, in the same *Comptes*, a number of *maquerelles* put in the pillory with a similar ceremonial and a similar employment of birch switches among the spectators. The pillory where the *maquerelles* were customarily exposed was the one which had been constructed on the very site of the *Puits Lori* (that is to say, undoubtedly, *puits de l'oreille*, well of the ear). When the time for the executions came, there was reared in front of this well a scaffolding surmounted by a turning cage, with openings through which the victims passed their heads and hands in order to remain thus exposed to the curious glances of the crowd, for one whole market

day. The executioner who presided over this punishment was called upon to turn in succession to the four points of the compass the guilty ones whom he had put in the pillory, after having fulfilled the prescriptions of the sentence, cut off one or two ears, administered the lash, etc. Generally, the *maquerelles* who underwent this infamous punishment were assailed with insults, hoots, mud and ordure. All the pillories were not movable like the one of the Halles de Paris; there was frequently but an *échelle*, erected against the gibbet; the pilloried one, attached to the summit of the *échelle*, in a very inconvenient position, himself advertised to passers-by the nature of his crime, by means of the signboard, which he bore on his back, his breast, or even his forehead. Dubreul tells us that he remembers having seen, in the *parvis* of Notre-Dame, under the jurisdiction of the Bishop and his official, a villainous priest who bore on his back this inscription: *propter fornicationes* (on account of fornications).

The fustigation and exposition of *maquerelles* were, at all periods, a *divertissement* for the people of Paris; a crowd always gathered to watch them pass and to accompany them to the pillory. All the public women and all the debauchees took a singular pleasure in viewing the punishment of these unworthy women, who frequently grew rich at the expense of their numerous victims. Executions of this sort, always accompanied by the same mirth, took place rarely enough, however, on account of the scandal which they caused in the city. One might cite examples from the seventeenth century. Lebrun de la Rochette speaks, in his *Procez Criminel*, of the punishment of a celebrated procuress (*célèbre maquerelle*) of Paris, named la Dumoulin, who was first fustigated at the street corner, under the reign of Louis XIII, and later banished from the realm forever; but her ears were left intact. One might undoubtedly discover in the records of Parliament a large number of decrees and executions of the same sort; some of these executions probably provided a more tragic spectacle. Thus, in connection with the *Comptes* of the provost of Paris in 1440, we must attribute to the crime of *maquerellage*, plus other and graver offenses, this extract from the *Forfaitures*, reported by Sauval: "Of the sale of the movable goods of the late Jeanette la Bonne-Dalette and Marion Bonne-Coste, having been buried alive in accordance with the justice of Paris for their demerits, etc., the said goods having been distributed and rendered to a number of persons, as to them belonging, etc."

It was ordinarily in the *Marché aux Pourceaux*, on the Butte Saint-Roch, that the burial of women condemned to be interred alive took place, a punishment greatly in use until it was decided to hang the women like men. The first one to be hanged at Paris was a wretch who practiced all the trades inherent in Prostitution; it was in 1449, according to the historians of the time of Charles VII, that two male beggars and one female, "who followed the pardons and the holidays," as Sauval says, were hanged, a trio who had been convicted of all sorts of crimes. One of these rascals was hanged at the Porte Saint-Jacques; the other, with his wife, at the Porte Saint-Denis; "although the two were husband and wife," adds Sauval, "nevertheless, they lived together as though they were not married;" which may be taken as signifying that the husband prostituted his wife, and that the latter winked at the turpitudes of her husband. Sauval further contributes certain curious details to this patibulary history: "Now, since in France no one had ever seen a woman hanged before, all Paris came running. She went to the gallows with her hair all down, clad in a long robe, and bound with a cord about her knees. Some said that she had requested to be executed thus because it was the custom of the country. Others would have it that this was by order of the judges, in order that women might remember it longer." The gallows, nevertheless, was not from then on exclusively adopted as a punishment for beggar women (*gueuses*), for Sauval has extracted, from the *Comptes* of the provost in 1457, these two articles which may refer to *maquerelles*: "A woman named Ermine Valencienne, condemned to be buried alive under the gibbet of Paris (that is to say, at Montfaucon) for her demerits.—A woman named Louise, wife of Hugues Chaussier, buried in the same place, and they made for her a grave seven feet long for this purpose." The death penalty involved other methods of punishment in accordance with the good pleasure of the judge, who would sometimes command the expiation of a crime by fire or by water. Among the women who were burned alive at Paris, or tossed into the water and drowned under the Pont-au-Change, it may be assumed that a number had defiled their bodies and engaged in those detestable practices which the jurisprudence of the Middle Ages included in the category of sins against nature: "As to women who corrupt each other, whom the ancients name *tribades*," says the austere author of the *Procez Criminel*, "there is no doubt that they commit among themselves a species of sodomy

. . . and this crime is worthy of death, as M. Boyer remarks in his *Décisions*."

We shall not have recourse to the statements of Nicolas Boyer, author of the *Décisions Burdigalenses*, by way of proving that the parliaments and inferior tribunals were always merciless with regard to women of evil life who appeared before them under the burden of a criminal accusation. We shall give the reasons for this severity by citing this passage from the book of Lebrun de la Rochette, which embodies the unanimous opinion of the legal tribe concerning these infamous auxiliaries to Prostitution: "As to *maquereaux* and *maquerelles*, they are altogether insupportable, as the enemies of decency, traitors to conjugal and virginal modesty, assassins of the holy human society, betrayers of the legitimate succession of true heirs, brands of Hell, and true dragomans of the unclean spirit, who are never suffered in any well-regulated republic, since they spread nothing but paganism or atheism, as we may see from the *Constitution* of Justinian, *novella* 14. Thus, all the jurisconsults and doctors have held that: *Lenocinium travius et majus est crimen adulterio quia adulter in se tantum et in unam foeminam peccat; leno autem peccat in se, et duos pariter peccare facit*." And yet, one of the first codes written in French, the *Livre de Jostice et de Plet*, containing the customs of France, mingled with a literal translation of the *Digest*, provides nothing more than the penalty of banishment and confiscation for these agents of debauchery: "Those who disloyally assemble in brothels must lose the right of the city and their goods are the King's (Book XVIII, Chapter 24)." This article on *paines* will be found to be completed by the following one, which specifies fustigation before banishment: "The *maquerelles* of women shall be fustigated from the city, and their goods shall be the King's."

CHAPTER LII

THE ordinance of Louis IX relating to Prostitution was, then, always the unique basis of jurisprudence on this head, a subject which the other kings of France appear barely to have dared to touch after the Saintly King, that sovereign who had not feared to lay a heavy hand upon it in order to restrict it within wise limits; but the legalists and the magistrates, in adopting the ordinance of 1254, or rather that of 1256, in occasionally altering the text and in interpreting it also in different manners, in accordance with the needs of the case, added to it, as indispensable corollaries certain provisions of the Roman law which were in force in the tribunals, and which had come to be more or less mingled with customs and traditions that were the last vestiges of the codes and customs of the Barbarians. It was these customs that produced an infinite variety in the forms assumed by legal Prostitution in each province, and even in each city. It would be necessary to review the particular history of these cities and these provinces; it would be necessary, above all, to examine attentively the local legislation in order to determine the weird forms embodying this toleration of Prostitution and the penalty which was inflicted in certain cases. The most we can do is to glean a few facts, in dealing with a subject so vast and so complex, the sources of which are so dispersed among a multitude of volumes which we have not the patience to leaf through, and which perhaps would offer us but a prodigious mass of useless information. We merely must conclude, from a rapid survey of our notes, that it would be impossible to establish, city by city, or even village by village, a veritable pornography of ancient France, based upon authentic texts.

Let us remark, once for all, that Prostitution never possessed a special title in the body of laws, ordinances, and customs; it finds itself dealt with under many heads; it figures among heterogeneous facts which have nothing to do with it, and which indeed, are perfectly foreign to it. It is the same with the general Customaries, where it does not appear at all, as though the modesty of the jurisconsult had deliberately eliminated it. Thus, in the celebrated *Coutumes du Beauvoisis*, which were the principal source of French law for more than four centuries, one seeks in vain for a decision that has any

relation to public debauchery. One might say that the learned Philippe de Beaumanoir had desired to banish it from his book, even as he had wished to banish it from the Republic. The personal character of the juriconsult, the austerity of his manners and the modesty of his language, were undoubtedly opposed to his admitting, in the formulary of the customs of his country, the scandalous chapter of Prostitution. The anonymous author of the *Livre de Jostice et de Plet*, edited at the same time, does not appear so reserved either as to things or as to words. He begins by paraphrasing the ordinance of St. Louis for the reformation of manners, and he translates into the patois of Orleans the article concerning Prostitution: "Assuredly, the common and light women of the country and the city, shall be driven out; and the judge shall take their goods, or others, by his authority, shall do so, down to their cloak or *pélicon*. And anyone who shall rent a house to a light or common woman, or who shall receive such in his house, he shall be held to pay to the bailiff of the place, or to the provost, or to the judge, as much as the rent of the house is worth in a year." We see from this that the school of law at Orleans had given the force of law to the first ordinance of Louis IX, which had abolished Prostitution, and not to the second, which two years after had authorized it under a régime of tolerance.

By virtue of this fundamental principle, recorded in the *Livre de Jostice et de Plet*, we have seen, in the preceding chapter, what punishments were inflicted on the *maquerel de feme* and *cil qui fet desloyaus assemblée de bordelerie*. This latter was but an industrial receiving *bordiaus en sa meson*, and drawing from them an infamous lucre. The other was one who, through pimping, sought to corrupt for his own profit, girls and women whom he seduced to vice. This latter procurer, was a good deal more guilty than the simple *bordeler*, who as such found himself on the same footing with the robber, with the *toleor* and the *tricheor*, and who remained branded with infamy under the description of *maurenomez* (Book III, Chapter I). Among the *entremetteurs* and *entremetteuses* of the worst sort, the *Livre de Jostice et de Plet* does not, however, in basing itself upon the Roman law, which it incessantly invokes, draw attention to the ignominy of tavern-keepers, male and female, who generally did not limit themselves to providing drinks for passers-by, but who offered the latter, as well, a *transom de chiere lie*, to make use of the expression which had been consecrated in such places as that. The ordinance of St.

Louis, placed at the head of the *Livre de Jostice*, contains merely this article, which in the translation of our anonymous author is sufficiently obscure: "We are not forbidden to lodge in taverns, if there is no *estage* in that tavern." We may understand in various fashions this passage, from which we see that a tavern could in no case be transformed into a hostelry, and that it was composed simply of a shop without any dwelling annexed and without any *étages*, or upper floors, destined for sleeping purposes. A passage from the old translation of the *Digest* (*Ms. de la Bibl. Nation.*) confirms the poor opinion of tavern-keepers and especially of the *tavernières*, held by the French, as well as by the Romans: "His wife is a *tavernière* and she has in her tavern a light woman who abandons herself for gain; she should be taken for a procuress (old French, *houlière*).” The old French law differs radically from the Roman law on all points which had been modified by Christianity; thus, although the *bordelier* is reputed a *maurenomez*, the woman of evil life does not share with him this mark of infamy, and this, by reason of evangelic charity, which always gives a woman sinner the opportunity to repent and to resume an honorable mode of life. It was not rare, then, in order to redeem a soul for God, for a good Christian to go seek a legitimate wife in a den of Prostitution. It is in relying on a decretal of Clement III that the editor of the *Livre de Jostice et de Plet* may say: "It is established that all those who take *puteins* (*putains*) out of the brothel in order to take them for wife, and who shall so take them, shall enjoy a remission of all their sins. Note that this is a work of charity to call to the way of truth one who has wandered." He raises, however, a case of conscience with regard to a marriage of this sort, and in order to resolve it, makes use of a decretal of Innocent III, entitled *Significasti*: "One who takes a *putain* and leaves his wife, he shall be excommunicated for it: when his wife is dead, he shall take her. It is asked if they may dwell together? And the answer is, that if he has not purchased the death of the wife, or if he has not affianced the *putain* while his wife was living, the man shall be absolved."

The *Livre de Jostice et de Plet*, in which the chapter on marriage is marked by an impudent liberty of expression, which we do not dare to reproduce, does not, however, accord any indulgence to wives who prostitute themselves, or to men who assist their wives' Prostitution. These latter did not possess the right to testify in a court of law. "The king may take justice on those who keep the brothels." Those

who kept taverns were likewise incapacitated: "It is forbidden that the woman be a tavern-keeper or a *bordelière*. These two passages, which appear to contradict those which we have cited above, would seem to prove the existence, permitted, or tolerated, of certain brothels, kept or administered by certain men or women, who, like the Jews, consented to live under the permanent menace of the law, which they cajoled by means of secret contributions. Despite this tolerance, necessary to the public life of great cities, there was always the possibility of austere laws, calculated to repress, at need, excess and scandals. Thus fornication, though it ordinarily went wholly unpunished, had a penal article in the Customary code: "The fornicator shall be chastised moderately with pain of body." It is quite certain that the punishment did not often affect the fornicators, except in exceptional circumstances. As to the wife who separated from her husband for purposes of fornication, she lost her dowry. But rape, adultery and sodomy were rigorously punished by *common judgment*, that is to say, anyone might call down the punishment: "The law which the Emperor (the Emperor Justinian) made concerning *avotaries* (adulterers) is one of common judgments, by which not only those who banish all marriage are punished by the sword, but those who commit disloyal trickeries; and by this same law are punished the vices committed carnally with a virgin or a widow." The sodomites of the two sexes, were not, however, condemned to death until after they had suffered two corporal sentences for the same offense: "Those who are sodomites shall lose their c . . . and if they do it a second time, they shall lose the other member; and if they do it the third time, they shall be burned. The woman who does it shall at each time lose a member; and the third time, she shall be burned, and all their goods shall be the King's." Such were the penalties in connection with the policing of morals which were inflicted in the Duchy of Orleans.

This penalty, which the Justinian Code had furnished the French legislator, was to be found very nearly everywhere, with an endless variety of shadings in application according to the character of the local inhabitants. The provinces of the north were more indulgent in this respect than those of the midlands; Prostitution reigned there without constraint and manners, abandoned to their native instinct, had but to keep within certain limits fixed by a facile tolerance. Toulouse, Montpellier, Narbonne and other cities of Languedoc

possessed an organization of public debauchery that was still more regular than the one that then existed at Paris. However, Charles of Anjou, Count of Provence, and King of the Two Sicilies, was forced, following the example of his brother, Louis IX, to expel legal prostitution from his States; he did not succeed any better than the King of France in this design, which was more pious than it was politic, but he was forced to renounce his war on the prostitutes, who paid no attention to his ordinances. He fell back upon the *Lenocinium*, or *Lenoine*, which he looked upon with reason as the most dangerous element of Prostitution, and one which had escaped the most rigorous measures. In confirming the Customs of Provence, he ordered that all those who, as procurers, were engaged in corrupting or prostituting their wives or daughters should be expelled from his domains without process of law; and that if, ten days after the publication of this ordinance, any wretch was found who dared practice this impious *art*, the guilty one should be brought to justice and punished with corporal penalties, in addition to the confiscation of his goods, and banishment. Charles of Anjou also forbade all his officers to give asylum in their houses to any woman of evil life under pain of being deprived of their offices and incurring a fine of *cent livres couronnes* (see the *Biblioth. du Droit Francais*, by Bouchel, Vol. II, page 610). Languedoc, however, did not care to be reformed, like the neighboring provinces, where Prostitution was repressed by laws and customs which tended to destroy it entirely. The *Customary* of Bayonne, edited undoubtedly under the influence of the Spanish *Constitution*, prescribes the lash and banishment for *maquerelles*; but in case they had broken their ban they were to be condemned to death (*Coutumier General*, Vol. IV, tit. 25). The *Customary* of Marseilles, was not less terrible in this attitude toward procurers, although the common women were tolerated in certain streets of this city, where the presence of so many strangers and sea-going folk made the free commerce of bad-places indispensable. The *ribaudes* who plied their trade in the port of Marseilles were required to abstain from wearing garments or ornaments of scarlet color under pain of fine, and in case of failure to observe this regulation, they were to incur fustigation. We shall give, in the following chapters, the history of the obscene abbeys of Toulouse, of Montpellier and of Avignon.

Let us seek the traces of Prostitution in some other cities of Languedoc. At Narbonne, although it was the archiepiscopal seat, the

consuls of the city possessed the privilege of reserving within the jurisdiction of the viscount, one "warm street" (*rue chaude*—*carrerìa calida*), in which the officers of this lord had no right to execute justice, while the amorous women who inhabited this street under the auspices of the consular authorities had the right to carry on their indecent trade throughout the region, without being molested or disturbed by anyone (see the *Hist. Generale du Languedoc*, by Dom Vic and Dom Viassette, Vol. IV, page 509). At Palmiers, the residence of a bishop, the prostitutes did not dwell in the interior of the city; according to the *Customs* of Montfort, confirmed in 1212, these sinners could only open their *bordiaus* beyond the walls of the city, and at a certain distance from the gates (see *Thes. nov. Anecd.*, published by Mertene, Vol. I, col. 837). At Rodez, which also had a bishop, Prostitution, it seems, nevertheless existed within the walls, for the Bishop of this city, who was named Pierre de Pleine-Chassaigne, in 1307, forbade the inhabitants to receive into their houses public women (*nec recipient in hospitiiis suis publicas meretrices*), and he also went on to regulate the *livery* of these women, in such a manner as to make it different from that of respectable women; he forbade prostitutes to wear capes, mantles, veils, and robes with a train; he desired that their robes should fall to the ankles only (see the regulations of the Lord Bishop of Rodez, in the *Documents Inédits.*, taken from the Mss. of the *Biblioth. Nation.* by Champollion Figéac, Vol. III, page 17). At Nîmes, where the bishop was also a temporal lord, Prostitution had been confided to a governess of women (*magistra*), who received her powers from the consuls to whom she paid the compliment of bringing at fixed intervals a present to celebrate her investiture, known as the *osculum* or *osculage* (See the *Supplement* to the *Glossary* of Ducange, on the word *osculum*). Beaucaire, which at least was not the seat of a bishop, and which drew to its celebrated fairs a multitude of foreign merchants, was hardly in a position to get along without a privileged bad-house, which opened at the same time as the fair of Saint-Magdalen, and which closed when the fair closed. This bad-house was placed under the supervision of a governess, who was called the *abbess*, and who only obtained this lucrative office under certain singular conditions. She was not permitted, for example, to accord hospitality for more than one night to transients who desired to lodge in her *hôtel*. In 1414, an abbess by the name of Marguerite received in her house one Anequin, and was so well satisfied with him

that she forgot her duty and kept him for six nights; she was accordingly accused of an infraction of the law, and was forced to pay a fine of ten sous in the money of Tours to the Chatelain of Beaucaire. It is M. Rabutaux who has recorded this curious fact in his memoir on *Prostitution in Europe*; but he has neglected to tell us the source from which he obtained it. The revenues which Prostitution furnished the cities of Nîmes and Beaucaire had, undoubtedly, been very considerable when the fair of Beaucaire was better attended; but in the sixteenth century, when the wars of Francis I and Charles V prevented foreign merchants from coming to this renowned fair, the joyous abbey, which had formerly thrived on the generosity of these merchants, became almost deserted; for in the list of ordinary receipts for the year 1530, Antoine Boireau, receiver of the treasury of Nîmes and Beaucaire, enters but one sum of fifteen sous for three year's rights over the two *abbeyes* in this locality (*de emolumento duorum hospitiorum in quibus fit lupanar*). In addition to these two ill-famed hostelries, leased to one Louis Clucher, there existed a third, which did not provide any revenue for the city of Beaucaire, for the reason that it was almost always unoccupied (see the *Traité de la Police*, Vol. I, page 525).

There was not, perhaps, a single small city in Languedoc which did not possess, if not its abbey, at least its *light* women. Those of Bagnols could not wear, without exposing themselves to punishment, flowers, veils, furs of ermine, open hoods adorned with buttons, etc. (See the *Supplement to the Glossary* of Ducange, on the word *Mulier levis*). Those of Saint Saturnin had to close on holy-days, ember days, and the eves of holy-days; in 1414, Isabelle la Boulangère was condemned to a fine of ten sous for having received, on Easter Day, a man named Georges, despite the fact that he was her recognized lover. (*Ibid.*, on the word *Meretricalis vestis*.) These Languedocian manners, which the heresy of the Albigenses or Canteres had not relaxed, spread to the neighboring provinces. The city of Bordeaux, which was distinguished among all by the severe watch it kept over manners, appears sometimes to have drowned the *ribaudes* and their incorrigible procurers, by *keelhauling* them. Ducange, on the word *Accabussare*, informs us that this punishment was in use at Bordeaux, where the lower class of people undoubtedly pronounced this sentence and directed its execution. The victim, male or female, was shut up in an iron cage, which was plunged into the sea, and which was not

always drawn up before asphyxiation. Ducange states positively that the victims were drowned (*Subtus navim denuo submerguntur*). He adds that the same penalty was in use at Marseilles as a punishment for blasphemers, when the latter did not have twelve deniers to save them from the *cabussa* or dip in salt water. They drank more than they liked to the hoots of the mob, which took a great pleasure in their grimaces. At Toulouse, a similar punishment awaited swearers, procurers, and sometimes, Lafaille says, "prostitute women who have broken the police regulations." Jousse, in his *Traité de la Justice Criminelle de France*, published in 1771, describes the *accabussade* as it was still practiced in his day to the great delectation of connoisseurs. The unfortunate one who had been condemned for some deed of Prostitution was led to the town hall; the executioner bound her hands, attired her in a bonnet made of sugar loaf and adorned with feathers, and fastened upon her back a sign board which made known the nature of her crime. This inscription was ordinarily: *Maquerelle*. A railing and caviling throng accompanied the condemned, whose arrest was cried before her. She was thus led in procession to the bridge that crossed the Garonne; here she was received on a boat by the executioner and his assistants, who transported her to a rock situated in the middle of the river. There she was made to enter an iron cage, expressly built, which was then plunged into the water three times. "She was left there for some time," says Jousse, "in such a manner, however, that she could not be suffocated; all of which made a spectacle which attracted the curiosity of almost all the inhabitants of this city." Afterwards, the poor woman, half drowned, was transferred, *dans le quartier de force*, to the almshouse, where she was forced to pass the rest of her days, at least until she obtained grace and promised not to return to her former trade. We recall having read that a similar treatment was inflicted upon public women accused and convicted of having communicated a venereal malady to certain debauchees, who, acting as civil parties, sued the women who had infected them for the cost of their medical attention; but we are unable to say in what place or at what period so ignominious an abluion was inflicted upon the dangerous enemies of public health.

Notwithstanding the ordinances of Charles of Anjou against Prostitution in general, Provence had never been entirely delivered from a scourge which the ardent and nervous temperament of its inhabitants tended naturally to propagate, and which served as an obstacle to

worse disorders of the passions and the senses. We can understand that legal Prostitution could not follow a regular and open course in a country in which Knighthood and poetry had idealized the relations of the two sexes, where the cult of woman had been in a manner free from all material soil, and where the Courts of Love, owing their birth to sentimental abstractions, seemed to have taken upon themselves the task of slaying the man in the man and of annihilating the body to the profit of the soul. We have seen above, however, that Prostitution existed overtly at Marseilles for the benefit of mariners and foreigners, who had need of finding in a seaport the means of distracting them from the fatigue of a long voyage. There were women of pleasure in the majority of the great cities; but they disguised their shameful profession under decent names and appearances; they were no less a butt to the constant prosecutions of the municipal police and the ecclesiastical authorities; they were arrested, imprisoned and fined upon the most frivolous pretexts. At Sisteron, for example, the subprovost of the city, by an odious excess of power, caused to be incarcerated the foreign women who came to settle in that episcopal town and who arrived there accompanied by their lovers (*cum eorum amicis*); this subprovost (*sous-viguier*) accused these women of debauchery without anything to support the accusation, and compelled them to pay to recover their liberty, in order to live in peace (*ut pecunias extorquatur eorumdem vexaciones redimendo*). The inhabitants complained of these iniquitous extortions and, by letters dated the twentieth of April, 1380, Foulques d'Agoust, seneschal of the courts of Provence and of Forcalquier, enjoined the subprovost not to annoy the foreign women who came to reside in the city with their friends (*saltem cum amicis praedictis*) provided that they lived there respectably (*dum tamen vitam honestam teneant*). M. Edouard de La Plane, who reports this in his *Histoire de Sisteron* (Vol. I, page 527), informs us that the magistrates of Sisteron, undoubtedly to obviate the unpleasant disturbances which the sojourn of these foreign women had caused in the city, resolved to acquire, at the expense of the Commune, a house destined to receive the prostitutes and to lodge them merely on their passage through the city. The acquisition of this house had been decided upon in 1394, but ten years later, it had not been achieved; it was not until 1424 that the amorous women found a refuge at Sisteron, without having to fear imprisonment or fine. Those who arrived by the Pas de Peipin were subjected, the same as the Jews, to a pay-

ment fixed at five sous, which went to the profit of the convent of the Ladies of Saint-Claire. These religious had undoubtedly to expiate by their prayers the sins which vagabond Prostitution had brought within the walls of Sisteron, or at least within its territory; for the house of refuge for the *ribaudes* was not in the city. The establishment of this house at Sisteron appears to us to confirm everything which tradition has reported concerning an analogous establishment in the city of Avignon. We shall treat separately the question of historical archaeology, which should be approached without preconceived ideas.

It is undeniable that Italian manners had become acclimated with the popes in the territory of the counts of Avignon; and the thesis might be sustained that this papal city had effected no change in the habits of the Roman *meretrices*, in whom the red hats of the cardinals struck no fear. From Avignon to Lyons, Prostitution had but to ascend the Rhône; and this great city included too many inhabitants for the police to be other than tolerant in the matter of morals. Guillaume Paradin, in his *Memoires de l'Histoire de Lyon* (edition of 1573 in-fol., Chap. 58), reports a municipal regulation of 1475, which recalls the ordinances of the provosts of Paris on the same subject. By this decree, the public women of Lyons were enjoined to abandon the *worthy and respectable* streets and to retire into two houses of asylum, where they practiced their miserable trade under the surveillance of the consuls. Each of these houses had but a single door, so that the *ribaudes* who committed a crime in these places of debauchery might not be able to flee from the rear at the moment when someone cried for aid. This ordinance regulated still further the costume of dissolute women, who were forbidden, under pain of confiscation, to employ for their adornment robes trimmed in silver, furs of *penne gris* or *menu-vair*, *laitistes* or black or white *peau d'aigneaux*, excepting only a *pélicon* of black or white, and finally, the hoods of *good women*; they were required to wear under pain of prison and a fine of sixty sous, "continually, each one, on the left arm, from the sleeve of their robes, three fingers above the juncture of the elbow, a red aglet, hanging doubly down the length of the arm, half a foot." The mark (*ensigne*) of bad women was only seen in those cities where Prostitution was tolerated and open. Despite the complacencies of the law toward vice, the *lenoine* or *la houllerie* did not share in the benefits of this tolerance; procurers, male or female, were always without the rights of the common law. They were lashed, imprisoned, driven out

and their goods confiscated. "Sometimes the procuress," says Muyart de Vouglans, "was mounted on an ass, her face turned toward the tail, with a straw hat and a sign-board." She was promenaded thus through the city, amid the insults of the populace; then, after having been lashed by the executioner, she was expelled from the country or locked up in an almshouse. This is what happened at Lyons and Geneva, where the guilty one, "mitered,* publicly lashed, perpetually banished under pain of her life," according to the author of the *Traité des Peines et Amendes*, took with her in her punishment the accomplice of her crime, who had loaned or rented her his house. This house being confiscated, the accomplice paid *d'abondant* a fine of ten pounds in gold. Jean Duret, in complaining of the indulgence displayed in such legislation, gives us to understand that the death penalty was still inflicted in his day, in certain cases. Those cities which did not possess stationary *ribaudes* contented themselves with those whom chance brought them and who ran about the country seeking fortune; these did not have permission to remain more than forty-eight hours in inhabited places, where they stopped with their ruffians. Generally, they lodged in the suburbs or beyond the walls, sometimes in an isolated *borde*, sometimes in a place of refuge reserved for them, and sometimes even in the open air, behind a hedge or among the wheat. An agreement entered into in 1513, following a lawsuit between the lord and the inhabitants of the Communes of La Roche, Clugny and Alençon (Drôme), forbade the inhabitants of these Communes to lodge in their houses for more than one night public *ribaudes* and their ruffians who were crossing the country: "that no person shall lodge public *ribaudes* in the said place more than one night, nor ruffians, under pain of five sous for each time." (See the *Doc. Histor. Inédits.*, published by Champollion-Figéac, Vol. IV, page 352.) This quotation, which we might support with a number of similar ones, establishes the existence of those vagabond prostitutes who went from city to city making a traffic of their bodies, and who possessed, ordinarily, as companions or as friends, *ribauds* whom they supported with the ignoble product of their immodesty. These *ribauds* were often not without their value to their *ladies* and *mistresses*, in protecting the

*Translator's Note:—Cf. Aretino's *La Cortigiana*, Act II, Alvia's description of her former mistress: "... and she might now be wearing the mitre which she wore three years ago on the day of St. Peter Martyr; and she would just as soon ride on the ass as on the cart; and she was not at all concerned with the paintings on the mitre, so the neighbors could not say she did it out of vain glory." Etc. (Putnam translation)

latter against violences to which these unfortunate ones were constantly exposed on the part of the first comer. Nothing was more frequent than such craven acts of violence, which nearly always went unpunished. The law, however, was not without weapons in this respect, and the violation of a woman of evil life has been put by juriconsults in the same class with the rape of a respectable woman. In the privileges which the Seigneur de Chaudieu granted, in 1389, to the bourgeoisie of Eyrien, near Valence, privileges confirmed the same year by Charles VI, it is stated that whoever shall have violated a dissolute woman or any other belonging to a place of debauchery (*Si quis mulierum diffamatam aut aliam de lupanari violenter coegerit*) shall pay one hundred sous in fine. A portion of this fine returned by right to the person who had experienced the damage, which legislators looked upon less as a personal injury than as a theft accomplished with threats and violence. (*Ordonn. des Rois de France*, Vol. VII, page 316).

If the legislator posed sometimes as the protector of disrespeckable women, who in their branded state were left at the mercy of all sorts of insults, he protected equally those who had to protect themselves. against the conspiracies of those astute women and their vile aides. Thus, one of the commonest and one of the easiest forms of speculation was to accuse of violence a man who had done nothing more than make an amiable bargain and take the goods which he thought he had purchased. The rich Lombards, Jewish* or Italian bankers, in whose hands was concentrated all the moneyed commerce, were constantly exposed to enterprises of this nature; a woman was introduced into their houses, as a servant or otherwise; then she would make a complaint and pretend to have been mishandled against her will; when this debauchee was asked to take an oath, she would not hesitate to do so on the Gospel; and the imprudent foreigner never got off with less than an enormous fine, of which the woman and her accomplices shared the greater part. This manner of exploiting the delicate position of the Lombards had become so frequent at the end of the fourteenth century that the Lombards did not care to establish a bank in the cities of France, unless their honor and their purses were protected against the ambuscades of Prostitution. As a consequence, we remark this

*Translator's Note:—Cf. Nana's advice to her daughter, Pippa, on the subject of Jews, Aretino's *I Ragionamenti*, First Day of the Second Part, Putnam translation, pp. 118ff.

clause, nearly identical in the two cases, in the letters of the Kings, Charles V and Charles VI, who accord to the associations of the Lombards the privilege of opening a bank and of lending money in the cities of Troyes, Paris, Amiens, Nîmes, Laon, and Meaux: "Item, if any women reputed to be of evil life are within the houses of the said merchants, and if they say or maintain by their knavery that they are or have been forced by the same merchants or any of them, that on this account, the said women shall not be heard, nor shall the said merchants nor any of them, for this account, be penalized in body or in goods." Thanks to this paragraph of privileges, the Lombards had nothing more to fear from the malice of these women whom they took into their houses, and who had no other object than that of reporting that they had been violated by their employers. This precautionary clause informs us, moreover, that these Lombards, who were looked upon as foreigners, dispensed with conforming to the ecclesiastical and civil ordinances which forbade respectable folk from lodging in their houses debauched women for more than one night. The sojourn of a prostitute in their dwelling had no unfavorable consequences for them, and they did not thereby incur prison or a fine or blame of any sort.

All the ordinances relating to the banks or *comptoirs d'escompte* of Paris, Troyes, Amiens, Laon, Meaux, etc., indicate the frequent or habitual presence of amorous women in these different cities, and the attempts at seduction which were incessantly renewed against the Lombards and Italians. These latter might, moreover, give themselves with impunity to all those disorderly practices which the law would have followed up and punished had the subjects of the king been involved. The sage and virtuous Charles V states so clearly, in the privileges which he accorded, in 1366, to the Italian merchants established at Nîmes; these merchants might not be disturbed and punished in a case of simple fornication, at least so long as they were convicted of neither rape nor adultery (*nec pro lubrico carne aliquis eorum punietur*); it is, then, to be presumed that the license of manners which these strangers displayed exercised an influence over the moral state of the surrounding population, which became corrupted by their example, if not by actual contact with them; for these foreigners kept with them a retinue of dissolute and debauched women, who led a merry life, and who were mutually perverted. We shall not, however, associate with their installation in the city of Troyes, in 1380, the

establishment of those "little shops" (*bouticles*) which the "cloistered daughters of joy" (*filles de joie cloistrières*), or common women had kept from olden times (*d'ancienneté*) in a number of places in this city, as we know from this article in a document quoted by the continuators of Ducange, under the word *Clausurae*: "Item, that all women of cloistered life, or common or defamed women, shall keep their shops (*bouticles*) in the places for this ordained from olden times in the said city." The cities which neighbored Paris, those, so to speak, which found themselves in the radius of the king's court, made it a point of honor in being the first to obey the royal ordinances and to imitate scrupulously the organization of the Parisian police, even as they imitated the manners, the modes, the customs and the jargon of the Capital. They did not lag behind so far as imitation in matters of debauchery was concerned, and to cite but one bizarre instance, we are inclined to believe that a *bon compagnon* of the province who had seen his Paris and who had found his amusements in the rues *Tirev . . .*, *Trousse-Putain* and others as indecent in name as in population, was also a canny frequenter of the rue *Pousse-Penil* at Issoudun and of the rue *Retrousse-Penil* at Blois and of all these streets *sans chef* which were devoted to legal Prostitution.

CHAPTER LIII

THE central provinces of France were those in which Prostitution encountered the fewest restraints and found the most favorable conditions. It was given free field so long as it submitted to local custom and held itself apart without causing any trouble or *contents*. Only scandal and open infractions of the law were punished in its case. It is to be remarked that these provinces were also those in which civilization had best succeeded in mellowing manners; if public debauchery lived there on good terms with the lords and the Communes, the general character of the inhabitants naturally kept them from all those crimes and violences which libertinism too often brings in its wake. Prostitution had then, the right of the city in each town of the Champagne, of Touraine, Berry, Bourbonnais, Poitou and Orléans; it merely was under obligations, in each place where it paused or set up its residence, to pay the feudal revenues and to conform to the customs, which frequently were not written down in the *Customaries* of the country, but which tradition had handed down from century to century. Among these revenues, there were certain very singular ones, which it is hard for us to understand today, and which may never have had any good reason. Thus, Sauval has drawn from the Archives of the Chambre des Comptes a document of the year 1498, which indicates that the custom of Montlucon put married women who beat their husbands in the same class with prostitutes; but the two classes did not pay a tribute of the same sort to the authorities of Montlucon. Every woman who had struck her husband was required to present to the *Châtelain* or to the *Châtelaine* a stool or a stick. Every prostitute who arrived in the country to carry on there her villainous trade had to pay, once for all, four deniers to the seigneur; and moreover, as a vassal, she had to go publicly to the *pont du Château*, and there stoop and give vent to an indecent noise, which she did not take the care to stifle under her petticoats. Following is the Latin text of the *Adveu* of the province of Breuil, rendered by the most high, most noble and most puissant dame Marguerite de Montlucon, on the 27th of September, 1498: "*Item in et super qualibet uxore maritum tuum verberante, unum tripodem. Item in et super filiâ communi, sexus videlicet viriles quoscumque cognoscente, de novo in villa Montislucii eveniente, quatuor*

denarios semel, aut unum bombum sive vulgariter pet, super pontem de castro Montislucii solvendum."*

The commentators, who must put their noses into everything, and who prefer to put them into the most malodorous places, have not failed to beat the bush about this dirty revenue. Some have pretended that the *filles folles de leur corps* could not give the seigneur of Montlucon more than the price at which they were generally esteemed; they have compared to this indecent tax which the lord demanded of them a proverbial saying which was formerly in use regarding prostitutes: "*La velle ne vaut pas un pet* (She is not worth a poop)." Other archæologists have recalled in this connection an explained passage in the *Pantagruel*, in which Rabelais shows us how poops give birth to little men, while the *vesnes* or fizzles give birth to little women. Which gives us the two proverbs: Glorious as a poop, and shameful as a fizzle (*Glorieux comme un pet* and *Honteux comme une vesse*). It would be very easy to compile a large volume on this delicate subject. We prefer to close the discussion by reminding the reader that, in accordance with the customs of feudal law, homage and revenue had to do with the sort of service which the vassal rendered to the lord or to his agents. The history of the fiefs is filled with clownish and facetious acts of vassalage among which Prostitution plays a strange part. In the *aveux* and censuses, taken in 1376 and other years, by the lords of Auge, of Souloire and of Bethisy in Normandy, the lord of Bethisy declares to his suzeraine, Blanche of France, widow of the Duke of Orleans, that the public women who come to Bethisy or who dwell there must pay four Parisian deniers, and that this tax, which was formerly the equivalent of ten Parisian sous a year (being based upon the annual revenue of thirty *ribaudes*) no longer brought in more than five sous, "because so many of them no longer come," as Sauval says (Volume II, page 465). The seigneur of Souloire declares in his turn that all those women who pass by the *chaussée de l'étang* of Souloire must leave in the hands of the judge the sleeve of the right arm, or four deniers, or some *other thing*. In order to understand this *other thing*, we must open, at page 110, the *Réponses* of J. Boissel, Bordier and Joseph Constant on different questions relating to the *Customary* of Poitou (1659, in-fol.); the seigneur of Poizay, in the parish of Verrure, formally reserved, in 1469, the right of levying upon each

*Translator's Note:—The Latin, it will be noted, indicates that this was an *alternative* punishment—if she didn't have the four deniers?

amorous woman who arrived in the parish, the ordinary tax of four deniers, or of taking "her wares" (*ses denrées*), the obscene wage of these poor wretches being fixed at four deniers. It appears, moreover, that in a majority of fiefs, the seigneur had the right to this uniform tax of four deniers from each woman of evil life who entered his territory, and who announced her intention of living there by her industry. But frequently, the seigneur would replace this pecuniary tax with some ridiculous revenue which would still preserve his feudal privileges. The King of France was less concerned with the origin of the revenues which fell into his coffers; for in 1283, according to a document contained in the *Glossary* of Ducange (on the word of *Putagium*, in the last edition) he still received the tribute of the *ribaudes* of Verneuil, at the rate of four deniers a head.

Prostitution, in these countries of the *langue d'oïl*, had not been given the seal of infamy which was branded upon those who lived at its expense in the provinces of the *langue d'oc*. The *fabliaux* and the *romans* of the *trouvères* of Normandy, Champagne, Poitou and Tours are filled with details borrowed from the amorous life of common and debauched women. The jongleurs, who were undoubtedly the companions of such women, and who frequently ran about the country with them, felt no repugnance at putting into their verses these joyous comrades of their vagabond existence. M. Bourquelot, in his fine *Histoire de Provins* (Volume I, page 273), informs us that the light women of that city were celebrated for their charms and their voluptuousness. They dwelt in a number of streets, the indecent names of which bear witness to their antiquity, and which were formerly "paved with prostitutes" (*pavées de ribaudes*) according to the local expression, which is still preserved, and which recalls the *Pavée-d'Andouilles* of Paris. The *Fabliau de Boivin de Provins* (*Ms. de la Bibl. Nation.*, Number 7218) describes thus one of the indecent streets of the city:

*Porpensa soi que à Provins
A la foire voudra aller,
Et vint en la rue aus putains.*

These streets especially devoted to the domiciles of women of evil life bore witness, moreover, to the profound demarcation which separated prostitutes from the rest of the population, and which pre-

vented their mingling with respectable women. These latter possessed neither the beauty nor the seductiveness of the indecent ones, but they were so jealous of their good renown that they held there was not a penalty heavy enough to punish a slander or calumny which dared to attack their reputation. They had, thus, obtained from the counts of Champagne support and protection in case one of them was injured by another and treated as a *pute* in the presence of witnesses. She who offered such an insult, without reason and without proof, was required to pay a fine of five sous, and to follow the procession *en chemise*, like the penitents, bearing a stone which was called the "stone of scandal" (*pierre du scandale*), while the woman who had been insulted marched behind her and pricked her rump with a needle. Following is the text of a charter, dated 1287, in which is related this bizarre custom, which Ducange does not commentate, drawing it from the *Archives* of the Champagne: "The woman who shall utter a villainy to another, like that of *putage*, shall pay five sous, or shall bear the stone, wholly naked, in her shift, at the procession, and the other shall prick her from behind, in the rump, with a needle, and if she utter any other shameful villainy, she shall pay three sous, and the men also."

It is evident that it was ordinarily the public women who were guilty of this sort of insult to decent women, and the law took up the defense of the latter, who were enjoined not to respond in the same fashion to these brazen ones. The *Customary* of Champagne deals particularly with this crime. The man or the woman who thus outraged a good woman owed her an apology (*l'écondit*), in addition to a fine of five sous, and, the *Customary* (Article 25) adds, "if it happens that the woman to whom the offense is offered has a husband, this fine shall be increased at the will of the seigneur to sixty sous." The *Customary* of the Cerny en Laonais and of la Fère, framed by Philip-Augustus, authorized every good man who heard a decent woman being insulted by a woman of scandalous manners to assume the office of advocate, and to avenge the insult by addressing to the one who gave it two or three good blows of the fist (*colaphi*), provided he himself was not moved by an ancient enmity toward the one whom he maltreated thus in the name of public decency. The *Customary* of Beauvoisis does not specify the insults and "villainies" (*vilenies*) which are worth a fine of five sous for a *dilain* and ten sous for a *gentilhomme*; it merely states that the greatest of misdemeanors (*méfait, après le cas de crime*) is to pretend in the presence of a married

man that one had had carnal knowledge of his wife (*con a geu o sa feme carnelment*), and on this point, Philippe of Beaumanoir tells us that, under the reign of Philip-Augustus, one man having said to another, "you are a cuckold (coz) and I am the one who have made you what you are!" the one to whom this insult was addressed drew his knife and struck the other. Imprisoned and brought to judgment, he was acquitted by the King and his council, as having acted in legitimate self-defense. The women of evil life, then as always, were prompt to offer an insult and capable of the most unworthy acts in intimidating good folk, who trembled at being compromised with them. One of their commonest tactics consisted in the odious advantage which they took of the state of the married woman, when they threatened the imprudent one who frequented them with a complaint in adultery, the victim being then obliged to purchase their silence. It was to practice these criminal maneuvers and to exploit for their own profit the remorse of libertines that they carefully concealed their married state and did not reveal it until they had committed a well-planned adultery. The formalities of the law not admitting the excuse of ignorance in such a crime, it was necessary for custom which had the force of law to extenuate, in such exceptional cases, the rigors of the common law. Hence this article from the *Franchises* of Pêrouse en Berry, which dates back to the year 1260, and which is an emanation of seigniorial justice: "If a married woman come to Pêrouse to commit *poutage*, the man who has no wife dependent upon him shall not be bounden to the seigneur."

The amorous women who, having the free use of their own bodies, did not possess a husband whom they could produce as a bugbear in a case of pretended adultery, would frequently indulge in a similar speculation by threatening with denunciation married men whom they had caused to fall into sin. There was one species of adultery which the feudal law punished more than another: a married man who had culpable relations with a public woman might, on that score, be accused and condemned. The authorities, undoubtedly, avoided applying this rigorous piece of legislation, but when there had been a complaint or denunciation, the judge was practically forced to hold the delinquent, who was happy if he got off with a fine, for the most frequent penalty in such a case, and the one which best satisfied the vindictive feelings of the populace, was the fustigation of the two accomplices, who were forced to run naked through the city and to

receive their chastisement at the hands of all the spectators, who became executioners in such a circumstance. We find, in this old custom, established, at least in principle, throughout France in the Middle Ages, a tradition deriving from the penalties of ancient Rome for adulterers, courtezans and debauchees. The *Customs* of Alais, edited in the middle of the thirteenth century and published for the first time as a sequel to the *Olim* (1848, Vol. IV, p. 1484), formulated in these terms the penalty for adultery: "It is also provided that if any worthy man who has a wife or a woman who has a husband be taken in adultery, they both shall run naked through the city and shall be well beaten, and the woman shall run first." The two guilty ones, then, ran together; but the woman had first to undergo the blows of the rods. The same collection of the *Olim* affords us a number of applications of this race of the *battus*. In 1273, the Prior of the abbey of Charlieu caused a number of persons, who had been taken in adultery upon his premises, to run through the city and be beaten (*fecisset currere seu fustigare per villam*). The inhabitants of the city complained to the bailiff of Mâcon, asserting that the Prior had arrogated to himself a right which he did not possess from their city (*quod novam et inconsuetam jusitiam faciebat in villa*); and the bailiff proceeded to claim for himself this right in the name of the King; but the Prior, falling back upon the ancient privileges of his abbey, did not persist any the less in fustigating adulterers whom he might seize in the act. The seigniorial justice, whose jurisdiction was very indefinite, engaged in incessant disputes among themselves over questions of legal rights, especially questions pertaining to the policing of morals. At Amiens, the Bishop maintained, in 1261, that he had jurisdiction over sodomites in the suburbs of the city of Amiens; the bourgeoisie of this city asserted, on the contrary, that this right had belonged to them since the establishment of their Commune; the debate having been submitted to the King's counsel, Louis IX ordered that the city be supported in its right to inflict corporal punishment on sodomites: *justiciandi corpora sodomiticorum* (see the *Olim*, Vol. I, p. 136). At Saint-Quentin, the Abbot and the monks, on the one hand, the mayor and the sheriffs on the other, fell into a dispute, in 1304, over the right to exercise common justice in the suburbs of the city; the Abbot and his monks wished to arrest, expel and imprison the light women (*fatuas muliers*) who had invaded the vicinity of the abbey; the mayor and his sheriffs desired that these women should

be permitted to live in peace; the king's counsel decided that the Abbot and his monks had the right to rid themselves of their indecent neighbors, but that the mayor and his sheriffs might, in their turn, arrest, expel and imprison light women throughout the Commune (see the *Olim*, Vol. III, p. 151). There was probably an agreement affected between the parties, which resulted in regulating the practice of Prostitution in the suburbs of Amiens.

These regulations were very nearly the same everywhere, for there was always the same object in view: to act against procurers, to confine debauchery to certain streets or certain places, and to brand prostitutes with infamy and prevent them from mingling with decent women. Jean de Bourgogne, Count of Nevers, by an ordinance of the 5th of March, 1481, enjoined all debauched women to wear upon the right sleeve a red or vermillion aglet; he forbade them to go through the city or the suburbs without this mark, under pain of prison, and he forbade them to go elsewhere than between the two fountains "which has been from all time their ordinary dwelling-place," forbidding them also to frequent the rubbing-rooms of the city (*Archives de Nevers*, by Parmentier, 1842, Vol. I, p. 184). Infractions of these regulations were punished in many ways. Abbeville was distinguished by the singular pillory which had been invented expressly for public women who had let themselves be taken in a dereliction: it was a wooden horse, called the *chevalet*, erected upon the Place Saint-Pierre. After having been copiously lashed, the women were placed upon this hobby-horse, whose sharp-edged back did not provide them with a very comfortable mount. Finally, under certain grave circumstances, they were banished to the sound of a bell; and if one of them dared to break her ban and return to the city to traffic in her body, one of her members was cut off and she was banished anew (*Hist. d'Abbeville*, by Louandre, 1845, Vol. II, pp. 213 and 286). The procurers convicted of the crime of *maquerellage* in the same city received a chastisement more exemplary than elsewhere; they were promenaded, clad in mitres, in a tumbril-cart filled with ordure; they were then led to the pillory, where the executioner cut away and burned their hair; after which they were expelled forever, and in case of breaking ban, they were condemned to the pyre. In 1478, Belut Cantine of Abbeville, "for having endeavored to persuade Jehannette, daughter of Witace de Queux, to go with him into the company of one named Franqueville, man of arms in the garrison of that city, was led mitred

in a cart through the streets, and his hair burned in the pillory, and this one was banished from the said city and suburbs *sur le feu* forever." The capital penalty, as we have said, was prescribed by law; but it was only executed in case the crime was repeated and aggravated: "the punishment of the procurer, according to the privileges of the city of Gand," says J. de Damhoudère, "was banishment, and the procuresses had their noses cut off; but they had no further use for their noses, after being banished, pilloried, and put in the cage." The learned author of the *Pratique Judiciaire és Causes Criminelles* adds this remarkable detail relative to the jurisprudence of Bruges in a similar matter: "I, who have been many years in the Council of the city of Bruges, have never seen corporal punishment inflicted on procurers, procuresses, or adulterers, but have only seen them punished by banishment from the city or country by the pillory or *eschaffaut*, by fustigation, or other similar penalties."

This jurisprudence, which was that of the Parliament of Paris, came to be established more and more in all the parliaments of France; but local custom nearly always reserved the right of giving to the execution a different character, depending on the manners of the country. Sometimes a fine was a considerable one, as in the case of the Parliament of Rennes, which punished with a fine of one thousand pounds, in the money of Tours, the *vendries de poupées ou filleries*; sometimes the property real and personal of the condemned was confiscated; sometimes the procurer was attired in a mitre or conical bonnet of green or yellow paper; sometimes they put on her head a straw hat to indicate that her body was always waiting for a purchaser; sometimes she was marked with the letter M or the letter P, on her forehead, on the arm or on the rump; the condemned one was paraded on a mangy ass, upon a tumbril-cart, upon a hand-cart or upon a hurdle; she was fustigated with rods, with leather thongs, with knotted cords, and with switches. This punishment, of whatever sort, was a popular event, the people accompanying with hoots and insults the unfortunate one who had been turned over to them as a plaything. "It was especially in the repression of this sort of crimes," says Sabatier, in his *Histoire de la Législation sur les Femmes Publiques et les Lieux de Débauche*, "it was in such cases that our fathers sought to employ a defamatory rigor and punishment which offended at once the principles of humanity and that decency which they were endeavoring to avenge," but the people were eager to see this foot-race of

adulterers and to play their part by pursuing and beating the guilty ones; sometimes the people would exceed the judge's sentence by forcing those who had been taken in the act, and who were looked upon as the people's prisoners, to run wholly naked. In the majority of privileges which the Communes obtained from their lords, they were careful to have included a confirmation of this right to punish adulterers, and it became necessary for the lords and the kings of France themselves to restrain this right in certain cases, by leaving always to the delinquents the right of redeeming themselves by means of a fine. In the *Privileges* of the city of Aigues-Mortes, recognized by King John in 1350, this foot-race of adulterers was admitted in principle, but it was provided that the guilty might avoid it by the payment of a contribution fixed by the magistrate. If the foot-race did take place, the two runners were not fustigated; and the woman, although naked like her accomplice, was required to conceal her sex; *Sine fustigatione currant nudi, copertis pudendis mulierum*, says the ordinance of King John, who, out of the same feeling of modesty, forbade the placing of men in the same prison with women. (See the *Ordonn. des Rois de France*, Vol. I.) It frequently happened that the population of a city impatient for so indecent a spectacle, would accuse of adultery pairs of lovers who had been found in secluded places, and would attempt to turn a simple though amorous conversation into a crime.* It became, then, necessary for the law to explain clearly what constituted a crime of this sort. A misunderstanding was impossible in view of the minute details on this point offered by the code of customs, liberties and franchises accorded by the counts of Toulouse to the inhabitants of Moncuc and confirmed in all seriousness by Louis XI in his letters-patent under date of the thirtieth of November, 1465: "If any man shall be found with a married woman in adultery, wholly alone and naked in bed, or in any other suspected place . . .," etc. (*Si omne mollierat era trobat per bayle ab femyna maridada en adultero tug sols nut e nuda en leg, o en altra loc sospechos, l'omme sobre la femyna, baychadas los bragas, o ce isera nut, o, sinon portara, la femyna nuda o sas vestimendas levadas tro a l'enbouilh. . .*)

Normandy was, at all times, quite as sophisticated as Paris in matters of Prostitution. We have spoken of the bad-house which the city of Rouen possessed in the second half of the twelfth century, and

**Translator's Note*.—Mr. Nicolson: "It is to be recalled with what indecent glee the rabble of these States witnessed a similar perversion of the Mann Act."

which the duke of Normandy, Henry II, king of England, had placed under the special supervision of one of his officers named Balderic. This personage bore the title of guardian of all the public women practicing their trade at Rouen (*Custos meretricum publice venalium in lupanar de Roth*), and he added to this extraordinary title that of *maréchal du roi-duc*, during his stay at Rouen, along with the functions of guard of the prison gate of the château, a post worth two sous a day in wages, etc. (*Glossary of Ducange on the word panagator*).

This bad-house, which existed at Rouen from the time of the first dukes of Normandy, and which undoubtedly held its privileges from William the Conqueror, was probably the scene of Robert d'Arbrissel's preachings. We know that the pious founder of the Order of Fontevrault went there with bare feet, in the public places and at the street-corners, to bring women sinners to repentance and to penance (*ut fornicarias ac peccatrices ad medicamentum poenitentiae posset adducere*). "One day when he had come to Rouen," relates the *Chronicle*, "he entered the lupanar and sat down at the fire to warm his feet. The courtezans surrounded him, believing that he had come there to commit sin (*fornicandi causâ*), but instead, he preached the words of life and promised Christ's mercy. Then, she of the *ribaudes*, who was in charge of the others said to him: 'Who are you, you who speak thus? Know, then, that it is twenty years since I entered this house in the service of sin (*ad perpetranda scelera*), and that there has never come here anyone who spoke of God and his mercy. If, however, I knew that these things were true. . . .' At that instant he led them out of the city, full of joy, to the desert; and there, having done penance, they passed from the devil to Christ."

The abbey of Fontevrault, which the pious Robert had founded, with the preferred purpose of receiving there lost women, did not, however, shelter him from the temptations of the Devil and the calumnies of the world. He submitted, it is said, to strange tests in the effort to vanquish the flesh, that flesh which tortured him and which held him enchained to the vanities of the world. He was accused of sharing the beds of his nuns and of using them to warm himself in order to have afterwards the glory of having conquered his senses. Geoffroy, Abbot of Vendôme, wrote to him a letter of reproach on this subject: *Feminarum quasdam, ut dicitur, nimis familiariter tecum habitare permittis, et cum ipsis etiam et inter ipsas noctu frequenter cubare non erubescis. Hoc si modo agis vel aliquando egisti,*

novum et inauditum sed infructuosum martyrii genus invenisti. Robert boasted of having never succumbed to martyrdom of this new sort; but in a letter of Marbode, Bishop of Rennes, published by J. de la Mainferme in his *Clipeus Ordinis Nascentis Fontevaldensis*, it is stated positively that the majority of the religious of Fontevault became pregnant as a result of the good works of their Abbot: *Taceo de juvenis, quas sine examine religionem professas, mutata veste, per diversas cellulas protinus inclusisti. Hujus igitur facti temeritatem miserabilis exitus probatus aliae enim, urgente partu, fractis ergastulis, elapserunt, aliae in ipsis ergastulis pepererunt.* We see, from this curious passage, that the house of the blessed Robert was not different from a bad-house except in the scandalous fecundity of its inhabitants.

Each city of Normandy also had its lupanar, if not its garde-noble of amorous women, and it might be remarked, with every appearance of reason, that the *maquereaux* and the *maquerelles* who figure in the ancient Norman *Customaries* were baptized with these soubriquets on the banks of the Channel. There is no evidence, however, that the dukes of Normandy were as favorable to legal Prostitution as William IX, Duke of Aquitaine and Count of Poitiers, who had established, or desired to establish, at Niort a house of debauchery on the plan of the monasteries of women.* William of Malmesbury (see the *Hist. des Gaules*, Vol. XIII, p. 20) has reported this singular fact in his *Chronicle*, and he adds that, after having constructed the edifice destined to house this lubricious monastery, the Duke proposed to entrust the administration of it to the most famous prostitutes to be found in his States: *Apud Niort habitacula quaedam quasi monasteriola construens, abbatiam pellicum ibi positurum dilirabat, nuncupatus illam et illam quacumque femosioris prostibuli essent, abbatissam et priorem, coeteras vero officiales instituturum cantitans.* This Duke of Aquitaine, who was a gallant troubadour and unbridled libertine, must have been influenced by reasons of policy, remarks M. Weiss, in *Biographie Universelle*, in his efforts to create such an establishment, which has since had its match in a number of cities of France. We do not know whether it was to explain this circumstance that William was cited by Pope Calixtus II to the council of Rheims, in 1129; but however this may be, the Duke did not mend his ways, but continued to sing of love and to set his subjects the example of a merry life.

**Translator's Note:*—Johanneau, editor of the French Variorum Rabelais, sees a possible source here for the Abbey of Thélème.

The women of pleasure of Normandy, Poitou and Anjou had done much, undoubtedly, to merit their renown; but those of Angers lorded it over them all, as is proved by this proverbial saying which was current in the fifteenth century: "Angers low city and high bells, rich whores (*putains*) and poor scholars." The people of Anjou had composed their own blazon: *Angevin, sac a vin; Angevine, sac a . . .* (the *Livre des Proverbes Francais*, by le Roux de Linci, Vol. I, p. 203).

The proximity of Anjou and Poitou had not succeeded in perverting the chaste Brittany, where Prostitution never had other than a hidden and timid existence, which accident sometimes revealed to the good Breton souls. Thus, toward the end of the fourteenth century, in the inquiry opened for the canonization of Charles de Blois, a witness named Jean du Fournet, a man of arms of the parish of Saint-Jossé, in the diocese of Dol, related to the ecclesiastical commissioners how the holy Duke had converted a woman sinner. On the day of Holy Thursday, of the year 1357, Charles de Blois, going from the city of Dinan to the château of Leon, accompanied by Alain du Tenou, his treasurer, Godefroi de Pondelanc, his maître d'hôtel, the Chevalier Guillaume le Dardi and certain other men of arms, perceived a woman seated beside the road; he demanded what she was doing there, and she, rising, replied that she was gaining her bread by the sweat of her body (*quod panem suum isto modo, per publicationem sui corporis, lucrabatur*). The Duke, taking his treasurer to one side, ordered him to approach this woman and to interrogate as to the sort of trade she practiced, for the good seigneur had not understood the response of the poor creature, who was trustfully admitting that she was a public woman (*quod erat mulier publica*), and that it was want which had obliged her to take up this vile trade. The Duke, hearing this, told the poor wretch that she should at least abstain from sin of this sort during Holy Week. She replied that if she had twenty sous, she would abstain right enough until the end of the month. Charles de Blois put his hand in his purse, which was not any too plentifully supplied (*modicam bursam suam*), and drew from it forty sous, which he offered the woman. She promised, in accepting them, to go twenty days without committing the sin of fornication. Godefroi de Pondelanc wanted her to take a vow to do this penance for forty days; but the Duke would not permit her to expose herself to perjury, but left her with the exhortation to persevere in the right path. This prostitute, who was called Jehanne du Pont, kept her

promise and did not forget the counsels of Charles de Blois. She renounced forever her dissolute life, and, with her forty sous, which furnished her a small dowry, she espoused a lad of the country, son of Mathieu Rouce de Pludilhan, and did not fall any more into sin (*Hist. de Brethene*, by Lobineau, Vol. II, p. 551). We might deduce from this adventure that Jehanne du Pont, as a "woman of the fields and hedges" (*femme de champs et de haies*) did not earn more than one or two sous a day, as she waited for customers along the road, like the foreign prostitutes of Judea, whom the Holy Scriptures picture for us.

The eastern provinces, where French manners have been preserved in all their impurity, were at all times a scene of the greatest excesses of Prostitution. There were in Lorraine and Alsace, as elsewhere, customs and ordinances which punished excessive debauchery, especially when it affected the clergy, who gave themselves over to it; but in each city, public indecency found protecting institutions, if it is permissible to employ this expression in describing the organization of vice from the point of view of the police. M. Rabutaux, after having described the state of Prostitution in the midland countries, "where we see," he says, "without astonishment the natural consequences of furious passions," is astonished at not encountering more severe manners in the countries to the north. "If we turn our attention," he adds, "to those countries which a less ardent sky ought to dispose to a conduct more grave, we find there the same excesses, of, it may be, a still grosser character." The explanation of this fact must, in our opinion, be found in an historic cause and in certain conditions of political economy. On one hand, the northern population had preserved its savagely lustful habits, and on the other hand, national legislation had done nothing to overcome these brutal appetites, which the abuse of fermented beverages and Rhine wines had exalted to the point of delirium. Prostitution is, then, admitted as a necessary evil, in order to safeguard the honor of married women, who, in spite of it, are not always preserved from the outrages of masculine sensuality. The legislator seeks and condemns merely the misdemeanors that flow from this impure source. Thus pimping is punished more rigorously than rape; but every girl and every woman has, none the less, the right to sell herself by submitting always to the various formalities of the municipal police. The law against women was not severe except in cases where they prostituted themselves with churchmen. Charles III, Duke of Lorraine, sums up the old jurisprudence in his

ordinance of the twelfth of January, 1583, which irretrievably condemns "those women and girls notoriously branded and defamed with lechery, who haunt the houses of the clergy, where they go to commit abuses." As to the regulations of legal Prostitution, they did not differ, although wider in application and less austere, from those which reasons of utility, morality and prudence had caused to be adopted in the great cities of the midlands. The women of evil life found themselves, as it were, cut off from society; they inhabited infamous quarters and streets; they might not practice their ignoble trade elsewhere; they wore a special costume or a distinctive mark in the manner of the Jews; they paid in a revenue to the treasury; and they governed themselves in accordance with the statutes of a regular association, analogous to the trade bodies.

At Strassburg, municipal ordinances of 1409 and 1430 provided that public women should be relegated to the Bieckergass, Klappergass, and Greibangass Strassen and behind the walls of the city, where women of this sort had dwelt from time immemorial, according to the ordinances, which were reënacted many times in the course of the fifteenth century. (See, in the *Mém. de L'instut, Sciences Morales et Politiques*, the observations of M. Koch, on the origin of the venereal malady and on its introduction into Alsace and at Strassburg.) As a matter of fact, there have been preserved in the *Archives* of this city the regulations and statutes enacted, on the twenty-fourth of March, 1455, by the magistrate of Strassburg, with reference to the community of women established in the street and house known as *kicken-gaff*. These regulations, composed of thirteen articles, include the police measure to which the places of debauchery were subject (*Dict. des Sciences Medicales*, Vol. XLV, article on *prostitution*). These bad-houses became so multiplied that, toward the end of the fifteenth century, the public officers charged with their surveillance and with collecting the lustral tax, counted more than fifty-seven in six different streets; in addition, the single street known as Undengassen included nineteen of these houses of lechery; there was also one in the little street opposite the Kettener and a number behind the house called *Schnabelburg*. Koch had a view of the police report which proves that there were a hundred authorized brothels in the archiepiscopal city of Strassburg. The entrepreneurs of these Alsatian harems would send their agents and their couriers into foreign countries to procure beautiful young girls who would hire

their bodies out by contract, and who, once prisoners in the houses (*klapper*) of Strassburg, would find themselves reduced to a condition worse than slavery. Finally, towards the beginning of the sixteenth century, the public houses were no longer sufficient to hold all the women of dissolute life who poured into them from all parts, and who, having no other lodgings, ever invaded the bell-towers of the cathedral and the other churches. "As to the 'swallows' (*hirondelles*) or *ribaudes* of the cathedral," says an ordinance of 1521, "the magistrate decrees that they shall be permitted to remain there another fifteen days; after which they shall be forced to take an oath to abandon the cathedral and other churches and holy places. It shall be enjoined on those who persist in debauchery to retire to the Rieberg (beyond the city) and into the other places which have been assigned to them." Fifteen years later, thanks to Protestantism, which, according to the remarkable expression of which M. Rabutaux makes use, "confers some dignity upon private life,"* there were no longer in all Strassburg more than two houses of Prostitution. At this period, the debauched women still wore the *sign* which the magistrate of Strassburg had imposed on them in 1388: it was a high conical *bonnet*, black and white, worn under their veils; it was of almost the same color as that *hennin* which Isabeau of Bavaria introduced into the court of France, to the great scandal of the *prudes femmes*. (See the *Observant*. of M. Koch, quoted above.)

Prostitution reigned with no less fury in the province of Messin than it did in Alsace, and at Metz as at Strassburg, the monks and ecclesiastics took part in the most scandalous disorders. In an *atour*, or ordinance of the magistrates, of the year 1332, the clergy were forbidden "to go by night or day into common places, to marriage feasts and dances and other places which it is not good to mention." This *atour* indicates "the great dissoluteness which there is among the monks of Gorze, of Saint-Arnoul, of Saint-Clement, of Saint-Martin, etc.," who were in the habit of running about the streets during the night, knocking at the doors of houses,** frequenting taverns and infamous places. This state of things could only have grown worse toward the end of the sixteenth century, and the chronicler Philippe de Vigneulles attributes these monstrous excesses to the affluence that

*Translator's Note:—By interfering with the private lives of those who do not see fit to lead the same life as one's self.

**Translator's Note:—These rowdy monks were known as "*Frahards*" ("Knockers").

came from the spoils of war: "There are to be seen in the streets," he says, "nothing but *ribaudes*, and, things being so infamous," severe *huchements* (proclamations) were put up on the rock known as the *Bordelesse*, in the presence of all the *Treze* (magistrates of the city)." This rock of the *Bordelesse* must have been the pillory, or the *justice* of Metz. One of these *huchements* under date of July 6, 1493, is reported in the unpublished *Chronicle* of Philippe de Vigneulles; "That all married women living apart from their husbands and girls of evil life shall go to the brothels, as in Anglemur (a cul-de-sac near the walls of the city), and into the other customary streets where such women and girls are required to dwell in the lower town, if they do not desire to return and to live as good women with their husbands, and that none of Metz shall support them or rent them houses in the respectable streets, under pain of a fine of forty sous. And that the said women and girls shall not appear at any feasts, nor at any dances, which shall take place in the city, and that none shall take them to a dance under pain of a fine of ten sous.

Metz had many streets devoted, from a very remote period, to the dwellings of dissolute women, and such of these streets as did not disappear with the old town kept their primitive character. Near the cul-de-sac of Anglemur, which was the principal scene of urban debauchery, was the rue des Bordeaux or du Bordel, which has since been closed, but which formerly abutted on the walls, parallel to the rue Stancul. This latter, which mounts the eastern declivity of the hill of Sainte-Croix, where was situated the palace of the barbarian kings, is narrow, gloomy, and malodorous, like all streets of its sort. The women of evil life here would agree, in return for a certain "*pension*" fixed by contract, to serve with their bodies in these houses of tolerance, which were rented under the *mainburnie* of the magistrates. And so, every unmarried girl who created a scandal by her depraved manners, was led away shamefully to the brothel and there given over to the *ribaude*, who proceeded to traffic in her body, if someone did not pay a good ransom for the girl, a sum, that is, greater than the procuresses expected to receive through the sale of this new piece of merchandise. Philippe de Vigneulles relates, on this subject, a touching story which he dates from 1491: A lass, going to the cathedral on Palm Sunday, met her *ami par amour*, who took her with him to his house, in place of accompanying her to church. The thing became known, and the magistrates summoned the one responsible

for the scandal; he was condemned merely to a fine of forty sous; but the girl, who was looked upon as being "full of ill will" (*remplie de malvaïse volonté*) was shut up in a house of debauchery. "Her friend followed her there," says the naïve chronicler, "and redeemed her from the hands of the *ribaudes*, by paying fifteen sous, and led her back to his *hostel*, and sold his goods, and went with her to dwell elsewhere." Another chronicler, the Dean of Saint-Thiebaût, furnishes us with a precise bit of information respecting the wages of Prostitution, at a time, it is true, when the abundance of common women did not compensate for the lack of wheat. In 1420, one might have four women for the price of an egg, M. Emile Bégin tells us (*Histoire des Science dans le Pays Messin*, page 311), upon the authority of this chronicler: "for an egg cost a gross and a woman four deniers; and the women had the better of the bargain." *Maquerellage*, nevertheless, constituted a business that was by no means un lucrative, and despite the dangers of criminal prosecution, despite the example of frequent chastisements inflicted on procuresses, there were not lacking shameful women who lived by a traffic in their own children. "One woman had her ears cut off," reports Philippe de Vigneulles (under date of 1480), "for the reason that she had committed many thefts, and had also led a young girl she had, who was her daughter, to the brothel and there had put her to shame." A century later, for the same offense, the woman would have undergone capital punishment.

The special history of all the cities of Lorraine and Alsace presents us with a multitude of analogous facts, which tend to demonstrate the unity of jurisprudence on the head of Prostitution. We shall merely report here two details relating to the cities of Saint-Dié and Montbéliard. In this last city, a *ribaud*, who was in the habit of running about the town in the costume of a woman (1539), was "bodily apprehended and put in the hands of the master high justice, to be placed in a cage (*échelle*), with two distaffs, then lashed and driven forever out of the land of the Lord of Montbéliard." It is probable that this young man made a sufficiently disgusting use of his feminine disguise. We have seen that, at Paris, *ribaudes* who went out into the street in men's clothing were likewise arrested; but ordinarily, the authorities were content with confiscating the unnatural costume. As for Saint-Dié, the women of evil life who dwelt in the rues Destord and Nozeville might boast of being very prolific, since four neighboring villages, Pierpont, Sainte-Hélène, Bult and Padoux, known as

the *villes mâleuses* (the male cities), had been peopled by their male offspring, who there had married and became subjects of the chapter of the cathedral of Saint-Dié, the same as the disrespectable inhabitants of the low streets of Destord and Nozeville. (See, in the *Arrêts de la Chambre Royale de Metz*, a census furnished to the Chamber on the 7th of January, 1681.)

CHAPTER LIV

THERE were three cities in France in each of which the historian of legal Prostitution might be able to determine the existence of a place of debauchery established by virtue of royal privilege and carried on for the profit of the city. In each of these three cities, Avignon, Toulouse and Montpellier, we find, in the interest of good manners, an obscene *abbey*, administered by the municipal authorities as an establishment of public utility. We believe that the annals of these three establishments deserve to be recorded and compared in the same chapter, in order to bring to light the influence of the manners and customs of Italy on Provence and Languedoc in the Middle Ages.

"From the most remote antiquity," says an ordinance of Louis XI, which we have already quoted, "it has been the custom in our country of Languedoc, and especially in the worthy cities of the said country, to establish a house and dwelling, without the said cities, for the habitation and residence of common women." At Toulouse, as a matter of fact, in the time of the first counts, a house of debauchery had been opened at the expense of the city, which drew from it a large revenue, the peace of respectable women being thus assured; this *abbey* was situated in the rue de Comenge. The heresy of the Albigenses, which did not permit carnal relations with any woman, probably contributed for a time to hindering the spread of Prostitution at Toulouse, and, to employ the fine expression of which M. Mignet makes use in analyzing the doctrines of these austere heretics (*Journal des Savants*, May, 1852), "the god of matter who ruled in the shady regions of defiled bodies" was powerless to defend his temple. An ordinance of the *Capitouls* of the year 1201 purified the rue de Comenge and transferred into the Faubourg Saint-Cyprien the establishment which disgraced it. This authorized bad-house appeared to be too near the city still; and it was later transferred beyond the walls, near the gate and quarter known as des Crozes (see the *Mem. de l'Hist. du Languedoc* of Catel and the *Hist. de Toulouse* by Lafaille). Had the doors of this public house, which was called the *Grant-Abbaye*, and which contained not only the *ribaudes* of the city, but also those vagabond ones who had come to Toulouse, been closed, the scholars of the University and

the debauchees, or *goliards*, of the country would have revolted in order to preserve what they called their ancient privileges. The city and the University had, then, deliberately underwritten the installation of these *fillas communes* and shared, *bono jure et justo titulo*, as proprietors, the profits derived from this obscene exploitation. The prostitutes who dwelt, permanently or transiently, in the Grant-Abbaye were constrained to wear a white hood with white cords as the *sign* of their shameful profession. They found it hard to submit to this regulation, which restrained them from dressing as they pleased (*se vêtir et aseigneur à leur plaisir*); for this hood of white did not go well with other colors which were in the mode, and the community of the Grant-Abbaye was always at odds on the question of toilets. The magistrates, however, were inflexible with regard to the observation of the ancient ordinances, and rigorously punished any infraction of the rule regarding white hoods and cords.

In the month of December, 1389, King Charles VI, visiting the fair cities of his realm, made a triumphal entry into the capital of Languedoc, where he was received with pomp, and where he resided a number of days. The entire population took part in the celebration accompanying his entrance, and the recluses of the Grant-Abbaye went to meet the King with gifts of preserves, wine and flowers, and to present to him a petition; they requested, in honor of the joyous event, that they be freed of the "insults, vituperations and damages" (*injures, vitupères, et dommages*) attaching to the white hoods, which an old ordinance had assigned their sorority. It appeared that the cry, *Au chaperon blanc* in the streets of Toulouse would bring from the houses and the shops a throng of children, who would pursue with hoots the unhappy head-dress, hurling after it mud and stones. The women of the Grant-Abbaye complained that the ordinances *concerning their robes and other garments* had been enacted without the *grace and consent* of the King; they therefore conjured this Prince to relieve them from such a servitude. The affair was brought before the council of requests and debated in the presence of the Bishop of Noyon, the Viscount of Melun and the Messieurs Enguerrand Deudin and Jean d'Estouteville. Charles VI, who had not yet gone insane, took a holy and paternal interest in the *petition of the daughters of joy of the bourdel of the city of Toulouse*, and, according to the terms of the ordinance which he enacted upon this occasion, "desiring to show grace to all and to preserve in the enjoyment of their franchises and

their liberty the inhabitants dwelling in his realm," he decreed in answer to the petition "that hereafter they and their successors in the said Abbey shall wear and may wear and clothe themselves in such robes and hoods and such colors as they may desire to wear, with the provision that they shall be required to wear about one of their arms an *enseigne*, a garter or list of cloth, of another color than the robe in which they are clad, without their being subject to any arrest or fine; notwithstanding the ordinances or prohibitions pertaining to the said women nor any others whatsoever." The seneschal and provost of Toulouse and all the other officers were charged, as a consequence, to protect in the future the ladies of the Abbey, and to see that they enjoyed *peaceably and perpetually* the grace which the King had granted them, without the officers molesting them, or causing them to be molested on account of their costume (see the *Ordonn. des Rois de France*, Volume VII, page 327).

The women of the Grant-Abbaye had cause to repent the special grace they had obtained from the King in being freed from white hoods and cords. The population of Toulouse was indignant that these creatures should be permitted to abandon their *enseigne* by virtue of the ordinance of the month of December, 1389, and the word went about that they should be insulted and mistreated whenever they showed themselves in the city without their white robes. The seneschal and provost of Toulouse winked at the indignities which they were daily compelled to undergo, and the officers of the king declined to hear their complaints. Not being able to obtain justice and protection, the *ribaudes*, rather than renounce the benefits of the ordinance which freed them from an infamous servitude, remained shut up in their retreat (*hospitium*) and no longer ran the risk of appearing in public with a simple garter or list of another color than their robe; but they were not permitted to forget their persecutors, who came to torment them even at the Grant-Abbaye. These persecutions tended to drive away the inmates of the place, who brought to the city a considerable revenue (*commodum matrum*), which was devoted to public expenses. This revenue continued to drop; and the treasurer, whose duty it was to collect these revenues each year from the common women and their agents (*arrendatoribus*), lodged a complaint over the loss of an income that was so easy and assured. An inquiry was launched, and it was learned that the inhabitants of the Abbey were no longer safe in their own dwellings; that bands of rascally

young fellows and libertines (*ribaldi, leones et malevoli*) were in the habit of coming, by day and by night, to burst in upon this obscene convent, there to commit unheard-of misdemeanors; that these offenders, who feared neither God nor justice, and who appeared to be inspired by the Devil (*non verentes Deum, neque justitiam, cum sint imbuti maligno spiritu*), were in the habit of breaking down doors and entering the house, and that in order to get at the poor wretches who had barricaded themselves in their rooms, they would demolish the wall or break through the roof; they would end by mistreating, beating and outraging in the most atrocious manner (*vituperose et atrociter*) the poor victims of their cruel and lubricious fury. The latter, to escape these oppressions, these violences and injuries, would accordingly flee with their servant maids and domestics (*familiares*), and the Grant-Abbaye was no longer anything more than an abandoned ruin. The Aldermen* endeavored in vain to bring a remedy to bear upon this evil, and to bring the fugitives back to the fold, by promising them support and protection; the habit had taken root, and, despite the injunctions of the Aldermen, despite the efforts of the city guards, the siege of the Abbey was incessantly renewed, with the same episodes of scandalous violence. The Aldermen, in despair, besought the King to come to their aid; Charles VII, who reigned over only a few provinces of his realm, then went to Languedoc to stir up the zeal of his followers; he repaired to Toulouse, and there examined, in council, the request of the Aldermen; he remembered that his father had bestowed a favor upon the prostitutes of Toulouse, and by letters patent of the 13th of February, 1425, he threatened with all his kingly wrath the authors of those excesses which had been so often repeated in the neighborhood of the Grant-Abbaye; he enjoined his officers to protect this establishment, which he took under his especial care, and he caused to be erected in front of the said place pillars bearing the *fleur de lis* (*baculos cum floribus lilii depictos*) as a sign of the royal protection (see the *Recueil des Ordonnances des Rois de France*, Volume XIII, page 75).

The arms of France struck little fear in the delinquents, who renewed from time to time their nocturnal attacks on the Abbey; they offered as an excuse the plea that they had not seen the *fleur de lis*; and the poor sinners within could only sound the alarm bell, call for aid and cry for mercy; they were happy if they escaped without a rape.

*Translator's Note:—*Capitouls*, term applied to town-councilors at Toulouse.

In the end, they wholly abandoned the Abbey, leaving it to their tormentors; they then retired to the quartier des Croises, where they were less exposed to the insolences of the mob. The Aldermen then saw the revenues climbing back to their former mark, and this grave consideration led them to wink at the encroachments of public debauchery within the walls of Toulouse. The *fillas communes* remained for nearly a century in the neighboring streets of the porte des Croises; they did not emigrate until 1525, when the University took possession of the houses which they occupied, and there erected edifices for its own use. They were then once more relegated to a place beyond the walls of the city; and the city bought for them, at its own expense, a great house situated beyond the walls, in a place called the Pre-Moutardi, belonging to M. de Saint Pol, the *maître des requêtes*. This house of Prostitution, which was named the Château-Vert or the Châtel-Vert (the Green Château) no longer had to fear the assaults of the disorderly, but offered a peaceable retreat to its *pensionnaires*, who labored away at their infamous trade for the benefit of the city; but severe regulations were in force at this period regarding the institution of the Château-Vert. In 1557, the plague having broken out at Toulouse, an order was sent out to the amorous women to remain shut up in their stronghold and to admit no one until the influenza was over. A few of them disobeyed this police order, and were lashed in the market place; the others fled to other cities where there was no pestilence. They reappeared in Toulouse in 1560, when the improved state of public health permitted the reopening of the doors of the Château-Vert. Their return was joyously celebrated, but the Aldermen, offended at the railleries of which they were the object as the result of their direction of this municipal brothel, knowing also that they were accused of buying their robes with the tax money of the Château-Vert, proceeded to give up this tax to the almshouses of the city. The almshouses did not enjoy it for more than six years before surrendering to the city a privilege that was sufficiently onerous; the benefits resulting from the exploitation of the Château-Vert were absorbed, and more than absorbed by the burdens which the almshouses were called upon to undertake in return for sharing the tax money from this indecent fief; for they were required to receive and to treat the patients who came to them from the Château-Vert. Now, for more than six years, these patients had been more numerous than ever, and venereal treatment cost very dearly. A solemn council was

assembled at the capitol and the question which then agitated all the magistrates of the realm was discussed, namely, the radical abolition of Prostitution. The notables of the city attended this meeting, and the majority of them were in favor of the suppression of the Château-Vert; but the advice of the Abbot of the Casedieu won the day, the Abbot holding with the first president of Parliament that it would be better to postpone the suppression of Prostitution to a more opportune moment.

As a matter of fact, there was not a city in which legal Prostitution was more necessary than at Toulouse; manners there were very relaxed, and the passions, under the influence of the climate, encountered imperious needs which it was necessary to satisfy within certain limits. This was the sole means of avoiding scandal and of assuring the safety of respectable women. Two facts prove that the magistrates of the city could not exercise too great a surveillance over the prostitutes, whom the Château-Vert could not confine strictly enough. In 1559, one would have found four of these unfortunate ones in the convent of Grands-Augustins; they had hidden themselves there under the monastic robe, and they there served the debauchees of the whole community. Three of these false nuns of perdition were hanged at the three doors of the convent, and a true nun, their principal accomplice, was sent in irons to her bishop. In 1566, three other women of this sort crept into the convent of Béguines; they were hanged without process of law. The Château-Vert, then, still preserved, in 1587, its ancient attributes and franchises. In that year, the measures of public health were put back into force as a result of an epidemic at Toulouse; the Château-Vert was evacuated and its gates were sealed; but the prostitutes, in leaving their retreat, did not change their mode of life, and despite the pestilence, which did not frighten them, carried on their dangerous industry. One of the Aldermen, whom fear of the plague had forced to quit his post and to take refuge in the country, made the acquaintance of the vagabond debauchees who were encamped about the city. When the pestilence had ceased and the Alderman had resumed his functions, he related, in the council chamber, the shameful spectacles which he had witnessed with his own eyes in the vineyards and the fields which had replaced the Château-Vert. After this, there was no thought of reopening this latter, but on the other hand, all the *ribaudes* who had there led so disorderly a life during the plague were driven out. They were locked up in prisons of

the city, and were attached to tumbril-carts "for the cleaning of the streets" (*pour le nettoyage des rues*). (See the *Annales de la Ville de Toulouse* by Lafaille, Vol. II, p. 189, 199 and 280).

Such were the vicissitudes of legal Prostitution at Toulouse down to the end of the sixteenth century. The history of the bad-houses at Montpellier does not go back to so remote a date; at least, the authentic documents on which we are dependent for a history are not of a date prior to the fifteenth century; but at Montpellier as at Toulouse, we see that, in accordance with the custom established from antiquity in the principal city of Languedoc, legal Prostitution enjoyed its *hospice* beyond the walls of the city and under the protection of the magistrates, who levied a tax upon the common women and their privileged agents. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, this privilege belonged to one Clare Panais, who had established his headquarters in a house situated beyond the walls of the city, in a place commonly called the *Bourdeau*. "It is there," say the letters-patent of Charles VIII, who confirmed Panais' privilege, "it is there that the common and public women are accustomed to make their dwelling and to reside day and night." Clare Panais enjoyed his privilege in peace and grew rich, paying in enormous revenues to the city. He had two sons, Aubert and Guillaume, whom he reared with much care, and who must have been accomplished young gentlemen. This excellent father died, and the two sons inherited the privileges attaching to the house; since this privilege carried with it much money, they did not dream of dispensing with it, but they did cede a part of it to Guillaume de la Croix, a money-changer, who belonged to the nobility of Montpellier, and who numbered among his ancestors the famous Saint Roch. From then on, the undivided property-rights of the Bourdeau remained in the hands of Guillaume de la Croix and the two Panais brothers, who became money-changers and bankers, without ceasing to carry on the firm of legal Prostitution which had been established in Montpellier. In this they were no more dishonorable than the council of the city, who handled the deniers which came from the tax on prostitutes, and in whose hands lay the direction of the Bourdeau. The mayor and magistrates who made up the council desired to prevent women of evil life from entering the city, even with the aglet upon their shoulders, and in order to deprive these women of any pretext in frequenting the rubbing-rooms and public baths, where they carried on their ignoble profession in secret, the authorities pro-

posed to the agents of urban debauchery that rubbing-rooms and baths be constructed in the Bourdeau. Aubert Panais and his brother Guillaume, as well as their associate, Guillaume de la Croix, consented to a great and sumptuous outlay of money (*grandes et somptueuses dépenses*), the object of which was to render the inhabitants of the Bourdeau wholly sedentary; but they profited from so fine an occasion by seeing to it that their old-time privileges in this house of tolerance were confirmed and renewed, by virtue of which, and through the payment of the sum of five pounds in the money of Tours, rendered annually to the king or to his lieutenant, "from then on, no persons of whatever estate or condition they might be, were to erect or cause to be erected, in the ancient part of Montpellier, any bourdeau, wine-shop, hostelry nor other rubbing-rooms, for the purpose of lodging, or providing a retreat or rubbing-room for the said common women, under pain of losing and having confiscated the said house, bourdeau, wine-shop or rubbing room." The city council, which looked upon this as a matter of public utility approved once more the clauses of the contract, and augmented the advantages of the agents of the brothel.

But these latter were soon disturbed in their enjoyment of the privilege; one of the partners, Aubert Panais, having ceded his share to his daughter, Jaquète, who brought it as a dowry to Jacques Bucelli, whom she married about the year 1465, a certain Paultet Dandr  a, an inhabitant of the same city, felt authorized to question the forfeiture of the privilege. His conduct was motivated "by envy or some other reason" (*par envie ou autrement*), and he was undoubtedly supported by the *recteur* or the bailiff of the old city. He began, then, by "retiring and receiving the said common women into a house of their own, situated within the city in the bailiff's district." But the existence of a place of debauchery within the city was a violation of all the customs of Languedoc, and the inhabitants of the neighborhood, priests and bourgeois, complained to the council and protested against Paultet Dandr  a's audacious enterprise; for they saw "the thing becoming a great vituperation and dishonor and a very bad example to married women, bourgeoises and others and to their daughters and servants, and also the scandals and inconveniences which might result." Dandr  a won his point; and probably with the secret support of certain debauchees, who drew a profit from the establishment of this central house of Prostitution, he continued to

keep an "amorous court" (*cour amoureuse*), and he frequently attracted there the *dames* of the Bourdeau. But Guillaume de la Croix and Guillaume Panais were rich and powerful, the former especially; they called upon the Governor of the city to close Dandr  a's house, which had been opened contrary to the ordinances of the kings and to the privilege granted Clare Panais. They did not blush to declare themselves, in their complaint to the King, the proprietors and entrepreneurs of the Bourdeau. Charles VII promptly dispatched to the States of Languedoc, as his commissioners, the Sire de Montaigu, seneschal of Limousin and the Ma  tres Jean H  bert and Fran  ois Halle, king's counselors, who betook themselves to Montpellier where the States assembled in the month of December, 1458. These three personages had been brought into the affair through a request which Guillaume de la Croix and his associates had addressed to the States, which did not disdain to concern themselves with the matter. The commissioners of the King summoned those involved before them and, after having heard them in the presence of the procurator of the city, they forbade Dandr  a, under pain of a fine of ten marks in silver, to lodge or to receive in his house any public woman. The procurator of the city and the seneschal of Beaucaire were advised to see to the execution of this decree, conformable to the ancient customs of Montpellier. As to the heirs and successors of Clare Panais, they were confirmed in the enjoyment of their privilege by the payment of an annual revenue of five sous in the money of Tours to the King's treasury, with the provision that "no one hereafter shall establish or build any other house or public place as a habitation for the said common women, either in the Rectory or the bailiwick of the city or elsewhere." The partners, not satisfied with winning their point at law, demanded of the King, in 1469, a confirmation of the decree, and this confirmation was granted them. Twenty years later, Guillaume de la Croix became a famous councillor and the treasurer of war, but he had not yet renounced his r  le of entrepreneur in the Bourdeau of Montpellier. Since he no longer resided habitually at Montpellier, and since Guillaume Panais no longer concerned himself with the administration of their property, he feared a reoccurrence of what Dandr  a had caused to happen before. "Fearing that some might desire to disturb them in the enjoyment of the things above set forth, and to prevent them, he solicited from Charles VIII a confirmation of the letters-patent which he had obtained from Louis XI,

and which contained substance of those privileges granted the Bordeaux at Montpellier. Charles VIII was careful to accord to his "friend and loyal counselor" (*ami et féal conseiller*), "for the public good and interest" a renewal of the ordinance which confirmed the latter's rights in Prostitution at Montpellier, as well as those of Guillaume Panais and of Jaquète, wife of Jacques Bucelli, all honorable inhabitants of that city.

Like Montpellier, Toulouse, the principal city of Languedoc and Provence, Avignon, had also its privileged *bourdeou*, established and constituted by virtue of royal and municipal ordinances; and this bad-house, the most celebrated of all those in France, on account of the statutes which regulated it, appears to have been organized upon a model of the public houses of Italy. The authenticity of these statutes, which the learned physician Astruc published for the first time in 1736, in the first edition of his treatise, *De Morbis Venereis*, appears to us to be incontestable despite the specious refutation by M. Jules Courtet in the *Revue Archeologique* (second year, third livraison). According to M. Jules Courtet, Astruc must have been the victim of a practical joke, and the apocryphal statutes, attributed to Queen Jeanne of Naples, must have been the work of M. de Garcin and his friends. It is in an anonymous note, written in hand, upon a copy of the *Cacomonade* of Linguet, that we find related the history of this joke, with M. Commin of Avignon brought in as accomplice, despite the fact that he was born ten days after Astruc's book was published. We know, in general, what a note written on a margin of a book is worth, and we are surprised that criticism should have founded upon such a note a negation of an historic fact which has come down through the eighteenth century, that skeptical and mocking century, without being given the lie or cast in doubt. One thing is sure, if the mystifiers of Avignon had been forced to find amusement of this sort at the expense of a scholar as renowned as Astruc, all Europe would have echoed with a tremendous outburst of laughter, and the treatise *De Morbis Venereis*, in which the fragment in question was printed for the first time, would not have escaped the consequences of such a mystification; for the end of all mystification is a satirical publicity. In any case, the facetiousness of M. de Garcin and his friends would have come to light, at least in Avignon, and Astruc would have been careful not to preserve the apocryphal statutes in the second edition of his work, corrected and augmented in 1740.

This work, moreover, translated into French by Jault, and into a number of languages, would have met with more than one contradictor in connection with the famous chapter on the *Bourdeou* of Avignon. It has been demonstrated, on the contrary, that local tradition regarding this house of Prostitution was constant and very widespread, since Astruc wrote to a resident of Avignon (about 1725 or 1730) to obtain, if it were possible, a copy of the original of the statutes of 1347.

M. Jules Courtet says that this copy was made after a pretended original, which malicious forgers had interpolated into a fine manuscript of the thirteenth or fourteenth century entitled *Statuta et privilegia reipublicae Avenionensis*. This manuscript, which became part of the magnificent library of the Marquis of Cambis Velleron, afterwards found its way into the Musée Calvet, where M. Jules Courtet was able to examine it. The *Statuta prostibuli civitatis Avenionis*, which M. Jules Courtet regards as "an imitation, a clumsy counterfeit, not only in style, but also with regard to the imitated handwriting of the fourteenth century," have been "transcribed upon a sheet of parchment," of which the second verso still bears a copy of a bull by Pope Gregory, in the handwriting of the sixteenth century. This circumstance alone would tend to prove that there has been no attempt to deceive anyone, and that the former possessor of the manuscript, undoubtedly of the sixteenth century, took upon himself the task of completing it by adding to it a copy of another more or less faulty which he had succeeded in procuring. The Marquis of Cambis, who was of Avignon, and thus in a position to hear all the rumors relating to this affair, would not have failed to do away with all copies which dishonored his own manuscript in place of mentioning in his *Catalogue* the singular statutes "which are in the Provençal language as it was spoken then, and which differs little from that of today." (*Catalogue*, p. 465.) It is probable that the original existed, or had existed, in the archives of the Palace of the Popes or in those of the Counts of Provence, and that any curious person might have made a transcription in his own manner, altering and modernizing the Provençal text, perhaps even translating the Latin text. One thing appears certain, and that is that the existence of these statutes was never in doubt; and their existence is, moreover, confirmed by their context, which is in agreement with all that we know regarding the history of Prostitution in Provence during the Middle Ages. As to all those moral considerations which have been put forward with the

object of proving the gross unlikelihood of such statutes, enacted or rather consented to by a young queen, they have no value for one who studies the policing of morals at this epoch. Jeanne of Naples, Countess of Provence, was no innovator in this matter; she merely sanctioned with her sovereign authority those urban administrative natures which the magistrates of Avignon had taken in the *public interest*, from motives similar to those of Charles VIII in dictating an ordinance and *letters-royal* on a similar matter.

The dissertation of M. Jules Courtet will at least aid us in demonstrating the fact that, prior to the statutes of 1347, Prostitution in the Italian manner had been established in the papal city of Avignon. At the council of Vienne, held in 1311 to 1312, the pious and learned Bishop of Mende, Guillaume Durandi, demanded a severe repression of the excesses of debauchees; he was indignant at the fact that the marshal of the court of Avignon had for tributaries common women and their scandalous accomplices; he desired that these public pests (*pestes publiques*), who exposed themselves as at a fair at the doors of churches, before the houses of prelates, and even under the walls of the Palace of the Popes, be relegated to the less frequented quarters of the city; he desired also that the marshal of the court should renounce the infamous revenues of Prostitution (see *Vitoe Pap. Aven.*, published by Baluze, Vol. I, folio 810). All the Fathers of the council echoed the complaints of the Bishop of Mende, but no step was taken toward a reform which would have injured many special interests, and the marshal of the papal court continued to receive the tainted revenues of his office, which were, in more ways than one, like those of the master of the revels of the court of France. The *ribaudes* multiplied and spread throughout the whole city. "There was no place," says M. Jules Courtet, "however sacred it may have been, that was protected from their incredible audacity." Petrarch, who resided in this city in 1326, was astonished at the excesses which the removal of the Holy Seat to Avignon appears to have favored, as though the Pope and his cardinals had brought from Rome a retinue of depraved men and women. "In Rome the great," says Petrarch, "there were but two agents of debauchery; there are eleven in the little village of Avignon." (*Cum in magna Roma due fuerint lenones, in parva Avenione sunt undecim.* See the *Latin Works* of Petrarch, edited at Bâle, folio 1184.) We can understand how Prostitution, left to itself, stood in need of a regulation like the one which made of it an institu-

tion of public utility in the other cities of Provence. Queen Jeanne, threatened in her realm of Naples by the army of her brother-in-law, Louis of Hungary, had just laid down her crown, stained with her husband's blood; she had taken refuge in the land of France, and after having taken in a second marriage her cousin and lover, Louis of Taranto, she prepared to sell to the Pope the domain of Avignon in order to purchase absolution for her crime and the support of the Papacy. It was in view of these grave events that the queen, who should have been at Aix, enacted or rather confirmed the statutes of legal Prostitution at Avignon, as Louis XI had confirmed similar ones for the cities of Toulouse and Montpellier. These statutes (as the first article bears witness) were drawn up by the consuls or governors of the city in the ordinary form of all the privileges granted to bad-houses, and the young Queen merely signed them, without reading them, upon the word of her chancellor, who had approved them. One may advance with certainty the theory that the one to whom had been conceded the exploitation of these privileges, being the most interested in obtaining them, had not spared any money in assuring himself thus of the approbation of the Queen and in winning a royal recognition of his rights before the cession of the domain of the Apostolic Seat.

We can do no more than reproduce here the Provençal text of the statutes as Astruc has given them to us, and we regret that M. Jules Courtet has not collated this text with the one contained in the manuscript of the Musée Calvet, which is full of erasures and superscriptions. This fact alone should exclude all idea of forgery on the part of the copyist or other translator of the original draft. We shall proceed, then, without making any change, to give this Provençal text, and we shall follow it with a French version, more literal than that which is to be found in the translation of Astruc's book, with its errors and its colorless periphrases.

I. L'an mil très cent quaranto et set, au hueit dau mès d'avous, nostro bono Reino Jano a permès lou Bourdeou dins Avignon; et vel ques toudos las fremos debauchados non se tengon dins la Cioutat, mai que sian fermados din lou Bourdeou, et que per estre couneigudos, que portan uno agullietto rougeou sus l'espallou de la man escaïro.

II. Item. Se qualcuno a fach fauto et volgo continuâ de mal faire, lou clavairé ou capitane das sergeans la menara soutou lou bras per la Cioutat, lou tambourin batten, embé l'agullietto rougeou sus l'espallo, et la lougeora

din lou Bourdeou ambé las autros; ly defendra de non si trouba foro per la villo á peno das amarinos la premieiro vegado, et lou foué et bandido la secundo fès.

III. Nostro bono Reino commando que lou Bourdeou siego a lá carriero duo Pont-Traucat, proché lous Fraires Agoustins, jusqu'au Portau Peiré; et que siego une porto d'au mesmo cousta, dou todos las gens intraran, et sarrado á clau per garda que gis de jouinesso non vejeoun las dondos sensou la permissieou de l'abadesso ou baylouno, qué sara tousos lous ans nommando per lous Consouls. La baylouno gardara la clau, avertira la jouinessou de n'en faire gis de rumour, ni d'aiglary eis fillios abandonnados; autromen la mendro plagno que y ajo, noun sortiran pas que lous sargeans noun lous menoun en prison.

IV. La Reino vol que tousos lous samdés la bayouno et un barbier deputat das Consouls visitoun todos las fillios debauchados, que seran au Bourdeou; et si sen trobo qualcuno qu'abia mal vengut de paillardiso, que talos fillios sian separados et lougeados à part, afin que non las counongeoun, per evita lou mal que la jouinesso pourrié prenre.

V. Item. Sé sé trobo qualco fillio, que seigo istado impregnado din lou Bourdeou, la baylouno n'en prendra gardo que l'enfan noun se perdo, et n'avertira lous Consouls per pourvesi a l'enfan.

VI. Item. Que la baylouno noun permettra à ges d'amos d'intra dins lous Bourdeou lou jour Vendré et Samdé sans, ni lou benhoura jour de Pasques, a peno d'estré cassado et d'avé lou foué.

VII. Item. La Reino vol que todos las fillios debauchados, que seran au Bourdeou, noun sian en ges de disputo et jalousié; que noun se doranboun, ne battoun, mai que sian como sorès; qué quand qualco quarello arribo, que la baylouno las accordé et que caduno s'en stié à ce que la baylouno n'en jügeara.

VIII. Item. Se qualcuno a rauba, que la baylouno fasso rendré lo larrecin à l'amiable; et se la larrouno noun lou fai, que ly sian donnados las amarinas per un sargean dins uno cambro, et la secundo lou foué per lou bourreou de la Cioutat.

IX. Item. Que la baylouno noun dounara intrado à gis de Jusious; que se per finesso se trobo que qualcun sie intrat, et ago agu conneissencé de calcuno dondo, que sia emprisonnat per avé lou foué per touto la Cioutat.

I. In the year one thousand three hundred and forty-seven, on the eighth of the month of August, our good Queen Jeanne granted permission for the bordel in Avignon. She desires that all the debauched women no longer remain in the city, but that they be shut up in the

bordel, and that, in order to be recognizable, they wear a red aglet on the left shoulder.

II. Item. If any girl has committed a fault and would continue to do evil, the keeper of the keys of the village or the captain of the sergeants shall lead her away, by the arms, across the city, to the sound of the drum, with a red aglet upon the shoulder, and shall lodge her in the bordel with the others, and shall forbid her to appear in the city, under pain of a fine* for the first time, and of lash and banishment for the second.

III. Our good Queen commands that the bordel be located on the rue du Pont-Traucat, near the Augustinian brothers, at the Porte Peiré, and that there be a door on the same side by which all may enter, but which shall be closed with a key to prevent any young men from seeing the women without permission of the abbess or *baillive*, who shall be named by the consuls every year. The *baillive* shall guard the key and shall see that the youth create no disturbance and that they do not mistreat the girls; otherwise, upon the least complaint which shall be made against those responsible for any disorder, the latter shall not leave the place except to be led away to prison by the sergeants.

IV. The Queen desires that every Saturday the *baillive* and a barber, delegated by the consuls, shall visit all the debauched women who shall be in the brothel; and that if he find any ill there as a result of lechery, this girl shall be separated from the others and lodged apart, in order that no one may approach her, in order to avoid the infection which youth might take from her.

V. Item, if it happen that any girl becomes pregnant in the bordel, the *baillive* shall take care that the infant is not destroyed, and shall advise the consuls, who shall provide for this child.

VI. Item, that the *baillive* shall not permit any man to enter the bordel on the day of Good Friday, the day of Holy Saturday, and the blessed Easter Day, under pain of the lash.

VII. Item, the Queen desires that all the debauched girls who shall be in the brothel shall not engage in any dispute or jealousy; that they shall not steal nor beat one another, but that they shall live like sisters; if a quarrel occurs, the *baillive* shall reconcile them, and each one shall abide by what the *baillive* shall decide.

VIII. That if anyone has committed a theft, the *baillive* shall

**Translator's Note*.—I render here Lacroix' translation of the original text, which, as may be seen, is not always so accurate as it might be.

cause her to restore the stolen object and if the thief refuse to make this restitution she shall be fustigated by a sergeant in a room, and in case of a second refusal, she shall have the lash from the hand of the executioner of the city.

IX. Item, that the baillive shall not give access in the bordel, to any Jew, and that if it be found that any Jew has entered there by a ruse and that he has there known any woman, he shall be imprisoned and shall have the lash at the hands of all the city.

Astruc, in reporting these statutes according to information which had been sent him from Avignon, says that they had been copied from the books of M. Tamaran, notary and apostolic scrivener in 1392; but we possess no information regarding this Tamaran and his manuscript, with the exception of an extract from the same books, indicating that a Jew of Carpentras, named Doupedo, was publicly lashed at Avignon in 1408 for having secretly entered the *bordeou* and there having known one of the girls. An analogous fact was related in the *Appendix Marcae Hispanicae*, where the scholar, Pedro de Marca, cites a document of the year 1024, in which it states that a Jew named Isaac had his goods confiscated and was corporally punished for having committed adultery with a Christian woman. Astruc, who has preserved this valuable detail (*Traité des Maladies Vénér.*, Volume I, page 219), adds few reflections upon the statutes of Queen Jeanne; he limits himself, according to his system, to supposing that *le mal vengut de paillardiso* could not be a venereal malady. M. Jules Courtet says that "this article, which caused the grave Merlin to doubt of the authenticity of these statutes, would be sufficient in the eyes of many folk to invalidate the pretended original." We shall see, in compiling the history of Prostitution in England, that the statutes of the bad-houses in London, forbade in 1430, the keeping in a public house of "any woman infected with the *mal de l'arsure*." By way of resumé, and after a serious examination of the question, we believe that, if we do not possess the original text of the statutes of the brothel of Avignon, we have none the less the regulations, which appear to be conformable to those which municipal tolerance had put in force in the cities of the midlands. Let us not forget to remark, in passing, that the old popular refrain,

*Sur le pont d'Avignon,
Tout le monde y passe,*

("Over the bridge of Avignon, all the world passes") might well be a jovial allusion to the ill-fame of the rue du Pont-Traucatou-Troué.

This street had sweating-rooms so ill-famed that a synod held at Avignon, on the 17th of October, 1441, forbade ecclesiastics and married men to frequent this place of prostitution, *considerantes quod stuphae Pontis-Trouati praesentis civitatis sint prostibulosae et in eis meretricia prostibularia publice et manifeste committantur*. Those who dared to flaunt this prohibition and the excommunication which the synod attached to it were required to pay to the bishop ten marks in silver, if they were surprised coming out of these rubbing-rooms in open day, and twenty marks if they went there by night. The provost of Avignon, Jean Blanchier, was charged with executing these synodical statutes and with the interior policing of the public *étuves* (see the *Thesaurus Novus Anecdotorum* of Martenne, Volume IV, col. 585). A few years afterward, in 1448, the Council of the city also concerned himself with the rubbing-rooms of the Servederie, which were but dens of Prostitution like the *stuphae Pontis-Trouati*. M. Jules Courtet cites also, from the *Petites Archives* of the mayor of Avignon (Volume I of the *Délibérations du Conseil*, session of the 4th of November, 1372), a police measure relative to the dissolute women of that city. The provost caused to be cried, to the sound of the trumpet, at the street-corners, that no one of these unfortunate women was to be permitted to show herself in public with a mantle or a veil, or an amber rosary or a gold ring, under pain of a fine and the confiscation of her effects. About the same time, there was a similar *cri et proclamation* in the city of Paris, and this injunction upon public women to conform to the laws, is sufficient evidence that they were not permitted to depart from their infamous character, once they had made a profession of their trade in an unclean *abbey*. We shall find further on, at Naples, in the customs having to do with public debauchery, the traditional origin of the *Bourdeou* of Avignon, that strange institution, founded by a young, beautiful and gallant Queen.

For the rest, if the obscene abbeys were royal or municipal establishments in the majority of the cities of Provence, the lost women who devoted themselves to Prostitution were in no wise permitted to practice their shameful industry beyond the asylum which had been granted them. Everywhere, their presence in the streets in the costumes of good women was looked upon as an infringement of police rules. An article of the statutes of Arles, which were drawn up in 1454,

proves to us that these police regulations in use in that city did not differ from those which we have seen were established at Avignon at the same period.

Following is the article of the statutes, reported by Millin in his *Essai sur la Langue et la Littérature Provençales*. "All public women, *putain* (*putan*), *catonnière*, or those leading an evil and dishonest life, dwelling in the way of good women, and wearing a mantle, either on the head, above the neck or the shoulders, a veil, garlands or a ring of gold or silver, shall be condemned on each count, to a fine of 50 sous and shall lose the said effects." This passage from the legislation of Arles would appear to indicate that a distinction was made between recognized women of evil life (*putan*), those, who, so to speak, possessed a patent, the night walkers (*catonnière*), and the debauchees who dwelt in the decent streets. As to the objects of the toilet which they might not wear, these were the same that had been prohibited for the *fillios abandonnados* of Avignon.

We have not found any document which permits us to estimate the price-current in Queen Jeanne's brothel, but there is ground for believing that this price was very moderate, in a province where, according to the popular proverb, the best woman was not worth 15 sous: *Qui perde sa fremo eme quinze souses grand dommagi de l'argent* "he who loses his woman and 15 sous is greatly out in money." Proverbs, it is true, are so hostile to women in all countries of the world, that we must deduce that these proverbs were made without the cooperation of the sex. *Ombre d'home vau cen fremos* (the shadow of a man is worth a hundred women), one remarked at Arles, as well as at Avignon.

CHAPTER LV

WE HAVE determined the fact, in studying the moralists and the poets of the Middle Ages, that legal Prostitution was an object of horror to the people, to the bourgeoisie and to the nobility, who looked upon it as a secret defilement of society, and who, with a common accord, endeavored to prevent it from showing itself in the light of day and from afflicting with a startling scandal, the eyes, ears and minds of honest folk. This Prostitution was, none the less, firmly established upon a large scale, for the benefit of a dangerous and suspect class, which lived beyond the laws of public decency, and which was made up of *ribaudes*, and of debauchees of all classes, from the vagabonds or *batteurs d'estrade*, from the loafers and beggars to the jugglers, fiddlers, and *mauvais garçons*. It was necessary for each city to provide at least one asylum of debauchery for this floating population which constantly eluded the regular supervision of the municipal police. This acted as a permanent safeguard against the enterprise of these *enfants perdus*, as they were everywhere known; for they were an object of dread to good women and their husbands, but were happily diverted from their evil instincts when permitted to haunt the company of the *folles femmes* and to divert themselves with the latter. There were also many of these creatures who ran about the country accompanied by their *goliards* and their lovers, and these latter indulged in much feasting and junketing at the expense of the obscene traffic which was carried on under their eyes, in those courts of ribaldry where they halted with their infamous companions. But it may be said that these indecencies were ordinarily confined to those places which were their customary scene, and what took place in the mysterious precincts of the Provençal *bourdeou* or the Norman *clapier* left no disorderly traces in the manners of the families who dwelt in the city.

These manners were often not very austere, but however relaxed they may have been, they had no intimate relations nor apparent contact with legal Prostitution, for the common women were in touch only with certain ill-famed men who shared the shame of such a life; *ribaudes* and *ribauds* formed a sort of immodest corporation, cut off from the bosom of society. Society, on the other hand, while holding

itself aloof from Prostitution, displayed a conduct that was no more exemplary and did not look upon it as a sin to satisfy the vice of incontinence; fornication and adultery, the truth is, were at home in all houses, and were welcome there;* the seigneur in his château kept a seraglio of servant maids and pages; the monk in his convent hid the most criminal *accointances*; the merchant in his shop coveted the wife of his neighbor; the poor workman or mechanic refused himself no pleasures which cost nothing; but in the midst of this excessive immorality, Prostitution, properly so-called, did not exercise a pernicious influence, and did not contribute to the general corruption; it would rather have attracted to itself the impure elements of the social life, if it had not been branded with the scourge of reprobation, if its miserable subjects had preserved some prestige in the eyes of the world, and if public opinion had not branded with the same dishonor the men who dared to enter the retreat of light women. Prostitution thus constituted failed, then, in part in its fundamental purpose, since it did not serve to purify manners, and since it left untouched, beyond its own domain, another free Prostitution, more active, more audacious, more epidemic, in a word. It might be said, and we repeat it, that for a number of centuries in France these two species of Prostitution had had no common bond between them, no relations, even indirect, no similarity in the matter of acts or persons. The civil authority troubled itself with only one of these forms of Prostitution; as to the other, which had neither livery nor mark, nor special houses nor police regulations, it promenaded with uncovered face in all the social ranks, and it spread its poison throughout the generous and brilliant institutions of Chivalry. It was, above all, to reform manners, to impose upon them a salutary bridle, to lead them back to the source of honor and of virtue, that a sage legislator, an unknown philosopher and a great politician created Chivalry, which came opportunely enough, in the midst of a depraved and gangrene-infected society, to rehabilitate spirit in the presence of matter, and, in a manner, to hurl defiance at all forms of Prostitution, of the soul or of the body. Chivalry was but an attractive form, given to philosophy, to morality and to religion; it protected, it saved the public decency, despite the inevitable excesses of the Crusades and the demoralizing influences of the poetry of the *jongleurs*.

We do not believe that Chivalry has yet been appreciated from this

**Translator's Note*:—A broad statement, and one that is to be more than doubted.

point of view, as the implacable enemy of every sort of Prostitution, as the safeguard of manners: she opposes the noble and pure inspirations of metaphysical love to the gross and debasing tyrannies of material love. She creates the Courts of Love, those gracious tribunals of gallantry and of *gentillesse*, in order to abolish the courts of ribaldry; she conquers and pacifies the passions with the senses; she founds virtue upon respect for one's self and others; she builds, so to speak, a pedestal of tender admiration and a throne of honor to place there—woman. This is, obviously, the principle of Chivalry; she enfranchises a sex which Prostitution had subjected to the most degrading servitude. On the one hand woman was a slave and humiliated by her unworthy rôle; on the other, she is queen, and her sovereignty is based upon love; but it is no longer a carnal love, the culpable pleasures of which stifle the instinct to good and predispose the heart to all vices. This latter is perfect love, it is heroic love, which finds its source in the most beautiful sentiments, and which is exalted through the imagination, in freeing itself from the shackles of the physical. The first lessons received by a page, a varlet or a damoiseau, destined for the trade of Chivalry, were solely concerned with the love of God and of ladies, that is to say, according to Lacurne de Sainte-Pallaye, religion and gallantry. It was the ladies themselves who were ordinarily charged with teaching the young the catechism and the art of love. "It would seem," says the learned author of the *Mémoires sur l'Ancienne Chevalerie*, "it would seem that one could not, in those gross and ignorant centuries, have presented religion to men under a form sufficiently material to bring it within their comprehension, nor to give them at the same time an idea of love sufficiently pure, sufficiently metaphysical, to prevent those disorders and excesses of which a nation that exhibited everywhere the same infectious character that it displayed in war, was capable." Lacurne de Sainte-Pallaye has not failed to discern philosophic bases of the institution of Chivalry, which was in its origin a moral and religious barrier against atheism and Prostitution.

To form a good idea of the Spirit of Chivalry, one should read, in the charming *Histoire et Plaisante Chronique du Petit Jehan de Saintré*, the admonitions addressed to him by the *Dame des Belles Cousines*, when he was attached to the service of this Princess in the character of *enfant d'honneur* and a page. The lady, who speaks Latin like a Father of the Church, gives him an edifying sermon on the seven mortal sins. Following are the terms in which she counsels him to

avoid the sin of lust: "Truly, my friend, this sin is, in the heart of the true lover, wholly extinguished; for so great are his fears that his lady may take displeasure, that not a single dishonorable thought is in him; for in this manner, he is true to the counsels of St. Augustine, who says:

*Luxuriam fugias, ne vili nomine fias;
Carni non credas, ne Christum nomine ledas.*

That is to say, my friend: Flee lust, in order that you may not be involved in a dishonest renown; and so, do not trust in the flesh, in order that by sin you may not wound Jesus Christ. And with this, St. Peter the Apostle is in agreement, in his first epistle, in which he says: *Obsecro vos, tamquam advenas et peredrinios, abstinere vos a carnalibus desideriis qui militant adversus animam.* That is to say, my friend: I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, that you abstain from carnal sins, for they battle day and night against the soul; and on this head, the philosopher also says:

*Sex perdunt vere homines in muliere;
Ingenium, mores, animam, vim, lumina, vocem.*

That is to say, my friend: The man who haunts light women loses six things, of which the first is that he loses his soul, the second his talents, the third his morals, the fourth his strength, the fifth his wisdom (light of wisdom), and the sixth his (persuasive) voice. And for this reason, my friend, flee sin and all its circumstances." The Dame des Belles Cousines terminated her sermon upon lust with this quotation, borrowed from Voëtius: "*Luxuria est ardor in accessu, foedor in recessu, brevis delectatio corporis et animae destinctio.*" That is to say, my friend, that lust is an ardent thing at first encounter, a stinking thing when you leave it, a brief delight of the body, and a destruction of the soul." It is certain that Antoine de la Salle, in writing the *Story of the Little Jehan de Saintré* for the amusement of the court of Charles VII, has drawn the materials for this story from a chronicle of the court of King John, and has taken from a book of Chivalry, a good deal more ancient, the moral lessons of the Dame des Belles Cousines.

The ceremonies attendant upon the creation of a knight prove still

more clearly that Chivalry had been instituted to correct manners and to abolish Prostitution. The novice prepared himself for entering the order of Knighthood by practices of austerity and devotion, which a monk might well have introduced into a monastic order. There were rigorous fasts, nights passed in prayer in a church, dogmatic sermons on the principal articles of the Christian faith and Christian morality, baths and ablutions, prefiguring the purity necessary in the state of Chivalry, and white habits, the symbol of that knightly purity; there was, finally, a solemn promise, at the foot of the altar, to lead a good life before God and men. "He who would enter an order, whether in religion, or in marriage, or in Knighthood, or in any state whatsoever it may be," says one of the characters in the romance of *Perceforest*, "he must first cleanse his heart and his conscience and purge them of all vices, filling and adorning them with all virtues." The numerous writings in verse and in prose which treat of the manners of Chivalry repeat, over and over again, that the true knight must be the *destroyer of corruption*. Chivalry was, then, a sort of *clergy*, which preached by example in order to render the people better and more virtuous, to maintain good order in society and to drive out all vices: "None should be received to the dignity of knight," says the respectable Chevalier de la Tour, in his *Guidon des Guerres*, "if it is not known that he loves the good of the realm and of the common people, and that he is good and expert in works of battle, and that he will endeavor, according to the commandments of the prince, to appease the discords of the people, and to combat, with all his might, all that may detract from the common good." Prostitution never found grace with Knighthood, which, however, could not succeed in destroying it.

However, Knighthood could not have employed a more efficacious means than the love of ladies in inciting noble youth to the common good, those who, from the tenderest age, had been trained in this school of gallantry. "The precepts of love," says Lacurne de Sainte-Pallaye, "spread, in commerce with the ladies, those respectful considerations and regards, which, never having been effaced from the minds of the French, have always constituted one of the distinctive characteristics of our nation. The instruction which these young people received, with respect to decency, manners and virtue, were constantly sustained by the example of the ladies and knights whom they served." The first act of Chivalry was the choice of a lady or damoiselle to love and to serve; the page, varlet or damoiseau began

thus his *devoir* or courtesy, and it was to this lady of his thoughts that he devoted all his *emprises* and all his feats of arms. It was to win distinction in her eyes and to win thus her love that he showed himself doughty and valiant, honest and courteous, loyal and courageous. The name and the colors with him took the place of a talisman in the most difficult circumstances of his life; he invoked her as he would a patron saint in the midst of combats, and if he was mortally wounded, he breathed his last sigh in thinking of her and in honoring her. Nothing less resembled physical love than this profound and delicate yet amorous devotion to a single lady, who frequently did not even confer the recompense of a chaste kiss upon a sentiment so exalted; but this sentiment, at once pure and ardent, discovered in itself an invincible force, which incessantly grew as a fixed and ecstatic idea; it was an idea attached, in a manner, like a shade to the woman who had inspired it and who did not always respond; and it persisted through time and distance without any pause or weakening, at least so long as the object did not cease to be worthy of it. "The more witness you give me of love, the more faithful you will see me" said Albert de Gapensac, who was at once a troubadour and a knight to his lady. In the language of Chivalry, knights and squires shared mutually a desire for the good graces and the favors of the knights' ladies. These good graces, ordinarily, were limited to a smile, to a gentle glance, to a simple kiss; the favors to the gift of a kerchief, of a sleeve, of a ribbon, or to the sending of a *camise* (chemise). Olivier de la Marché ends, with a wish of this sort, a letter which he writes to the maître d'hôtel of the Duke of Brittany: "I pray God that He give you joy of your lady and that which you desire" (Book II of his *Mémoires*). It is in the same sense that the Queen says to Jehan de Saintré: "God give you joy of the thing which you desire!" Now that which Jehan de Saintré desired the most was to remain alone with his mistress: "There were kisses given and kisses rendered, so many that they could not be satiated, and demands and responses such as lovers desire and command. And in this very pleasant joy they remained until they were forced to part." Despite these kisses given and rendered, despite these long interviews of love, Jehan de Saintré and his lady never exceeded the limits of true courtesy and never fell into the *bourbier de l'incontinence*. One would have said the lovers took pleasure in super-exciting their desires, in order to prove to what point they were able to combat them later and to conquer them. In thus seeking danger.

and in exposing themselves to it with a sort of pride, one might suppose that they sometimes succumbed to it.* This almost mystical love, which permitted itself everything except the final expression of these most burning vows, did not fear in a certain manner to satisfy the sensual appetites; there must frequently have been assaults such as the demon of the flesh made on holy men and women of legend, and which served to procure them a new victory, after fresh efforts sustained by the thought of the Redeemer, or of his divine Mother. The knights and their ladies did not flee pleasure, because they took a pleasure in triumphing over it, and even while they imposed upon their senses an insurmountable barrier of decent and virtuous love, they did not disdain certain of the compensations of metaphysical libertinism. Thus, the famous knight of Coucy, being on a crusade, sent a shirt which he had worn to the Dame de Fayel, who loved with a pure love this handsome knight, although she was married, and although she was careful not to commit adultery in fact, even by intent. This shirt the lady would put on during the night, when love would prevent her from sleeping, and she would imagine on touching the linen that she felt upon her naked flesh the kisses of her lover. These were the very words of the Dame de Fayel in the song of the knight of Coucy:

*Sa chemis qu'ot vestue
M'envoia pour embracier.
La nuit, quant s'amour m'argue,
La met delez moi couchier,
Toute la nuit à ma char, nue,
Por mes mals assolacier.***

Everything was love in Knighthood, but love loyal and discreet, a

**Translator's Note*:—J. U. N.: "Cf. Balzac's Conte, *Le Frère d'Armes*".

***Translator's Note*:—Mr. Nicolson's version:

The shirt he wears he sends, you see,
That I may kiss it well;
When Love and I cannot agree,
And night is a little hell,
Then all night long, it works for me
Its charming little spell.

love of which Maître André, chaplain of Louis VII, has given us the code, under the title of *Principalia Amoris Præcepta*. There is not a single law of this code which was not written under the inspiration of the noblest sentiments and the most respectable morality; one may judge of it from the following maxims: "Do not seek the love of her whom you cannot wed,—do not seek to take favors which are refused you (*in amoris exercendo solatio, voluntatem non excedas amantis*).—Even in the liveliest transports of love, do not depart from modesty (*in amoris præstando solatio et recipiendo, omnis debet verecundiae rubor adesse*).” It is, undoubtedly, a far cry from this to the *Art of Love* of Ovid. Maître André, chaplain as he was, was not a novice in love, but the definition which he gives us of love, as it should be decently practiced, does not appear to reflect upon the worthy cleric’s morals: "Pure love is that which unites absolutely the hearts of two lovers in the bonds of an intimate tenderness, but this love consists in spiritual contemplation and in an ardent passion. It may go so far as a kiss, so far as an embrace, and even so far as contact of the naked flesh, forbidding always, however, the ‘last solace of Venus’ (*procedit autem usque ad oris osculum, lacertique amplexum et ad incurrendum amantis nudum tactum, extremo Veneris solatio prætermisso*).” This legislation of love was not a dead letter. Chivalry had established, in every province, notably in those of the midlands, Courts of Love and *Parlements de Gentillesse*, feminine areopaguses, before which were tried all the causes of love. These assizes of ladies were held of an evening in the shadow of an aged elm; the tribunal was presided over by a knight of distinction, who was known as the *Prince of Love*, and sometimes *Prince of Youth*, elected by the ladies who composed the Court, and who had for assessors a number of high personages of the nobility and the clergy. The form of the judgments and decrees was the same as in the tribunals of royal and seigniorial justice; but the sentences were always possessed of a metaphysical character, and the lovers were never subjected to any punishment, corporal or pecuniary. It was, in a manner, public opinion which took upon itself the punishment of the guilty. These Courts of Love, where sat the noblest dames and the most honored ones by reason of their *prud’homie*, fulfilled a still more delicate mission, when they responded doctorally to questions of love which were submitted to them. "Finally," says Papon, in his *Histoire de Provence*, "gallantry so became the dominant spirit of this century of ignorance that it came to be mingled with every-

thing; it was the ordinary subject of conversation.* The ladies, the knights, and the troubadours practiced in disputing seriously on this important matter. There was no sentiment of the heart, however fine, which escaped their sagacity; all imaginable cases were foreseen and decided." This was, above all, the business of the Courts of Love, to pronounce judgment on arduous and minute questions, which the advocates of the two parties concerned would discuss with an incredible eloquence and knowledge of amorous science.

We can understand what influence such a jurisprudence as this must have exerted against Prostitution; thus, in the decrees of love which have come down to us, we do not remark any grave circumstances reflecting the licentious conduct of one or the other parties to the suit. Never does an act of debauchery come to offend the ears and minds of the judges; never does love, which is the soul of all these cases, stray off into an obscene path. There are here but the peccadilloes of lovers, the bagatelles of a refined gallantry; or perhaps the case is serious, and then the Court of Love becomes the tribunal of honor. A secretary who has been dispatched to a lady forgets his duties as an intermediary and confidante, and supplants his master, beseeching love on his own account of the lady before whom he should serve and defend the interests of another. The Countess of Flanders, assisted by sixty ladies, condemns the guilty one and his accomplice, by declaring them excluded from the company of ladies and the plenary courts of Knighthood. Maître André cites another example of amorous jurisprudence: A lover had forsaken his lady to take a new one in her stead; he soon grew tired of the latter and desired to return to the former, who received him with contempt and denounced his conduct to the Viscountess of Narbonne. The Court of Love, presided over by the Viscountess, decided that the lover, by his act of theft and deceit, had lost at the same time the affection of his two ladies, and was no longer

**Translator's Note:—*Mr. Nicolson observes: "Yet Marcabrun, who wrote between 1150 and 1195, could indite such lines as:

Amors es maut de mal avi;
Mil homes a mortz ses glavi;
Dieus non fetz tant fort gramavi;

which may be rendered:

Love is a mould of evil avid;
Myriads die of love's knife gravid;
God never made mage more impavid."

worthy of possessing the heart of a respectable woman (*nullus probae feminae debet ulterius amore gaudere*). To condemn with so much rigor the fraudulent inconstancy of a lover was to offer no indulgence to Prostitution. Infidelity in a woman was condemned still more severely, for a lady whose lover had been at war in Palestine for six years was given over to the tribunal of the Countess of Champagne and accused of having desired to "take a new friend" (*faire nouvel ami*). This lady alleged in her defense that she had conformed to the laws of love, which commanded that one should weep two years for a dead lover, and that the absent who did not give news of himself might be likened to the dead "without doing him any injury;" but the Countess of Champagne decided, as a general principle, that a sweetheart should not abandon her lover from cause of prolonged absence. The Courts of ladies were inexorable regarding everything that resembled Prostitution of heart or of body. A knight had laden with his gifts a lady whom he loved and who did not accord him any favor in return; he went to make a complaint to Queen Eléonore de Guyenne (Aquitaine), wife of Louis VII. This beautiful Queen, who was well versed in gallantry, then rendered this memorable decree: "A woman must refuse the presents which are offered her with an amorous intent, or else she must consent to pay for them by the yielding of her person; but in that case, she places herself in the same class with courtezans." (See the *Histoire des Mœurs et de la Vie Privée des Français* by E. de la Bedolliere, Volume III, page 323 ff.) Robert de Blois, in his poem on the *Chastoiement des Dames*, has reproduced this fundamental maxim of the law of love, regarding the jewels which a woman receives from a man who is courting her:

*Et bien sachiez, s'ele les prent,
Cît qui li done chier li vent;
Quar tost lui coustent son honor
Li joiel doné par amour.**

The *Arrêts d'Amour* which Martial d'Auvergne collected and pub-

**Translator's Note*:—Nicolson version:

And you know well that if she takes
Them, tis that love in her awakes;
For jewels in honor cost a price,
When given by love: that's my advice.

lished toward the end of the fifteenth century, and which another jurisconsult, quite as gravely facetious, has commentated in the style of Palais, do not display so severe a morality, and some of them appear to have been dictated by a gallantry sufficiently relaxed. We are inclined to believe, therefore, from the ancient Courts of Love of Provence, that they were rendered, in the time of Martial d'Auvergne, in some assembly of ladies and *gentilshommes*, holding a parliament in the manner of the *grands jours* of Perrefeu, of Signes and of Romanin. This is no longer the naïve and austere doctrine of a primitive Chivalry, which never jests on the subject of love; it is a gallantry still refined, but malicious and libertine; one feels that love has become materialized, and one sees it having resort, without any too much scruple, to the "last solace" (*dernier soulas*). The tribunal differs also from the true Courts of Love in that it inflicts fines, sometimes considerable, and corporal penalties on the delinquents, who are faced by the prospect of receiving the lash from the hands of the ladies and of having to dispense a good round sum to be employed in banquets and *en herbe verte*. The cases are pleaded before the judges of different retreats, such as the "mayor of the greenwood" (*maire des bois verts*), the "bailiff of joy" (*baillif de joye*), the "provost of love" (*viguier d'amours*). The allegorical nicknames for these magistrates lead us to suspect that this justice was no more than a jest. Among the weird decrees which Martial d'Auvergne has artfully and mirthfully collected, we shall select two which will enable us to appreciate the others. In the XIth decree, it is a lady who complains of her friend "before the master of the forests and the waters in the matter of the spoils of love" (*devant le maistre des forestz et des eaues sur le faict du gibier d'amours*); she accuses her friend of having pushed her into a river for the express purpose of being able to "put his hand upon her breasts" (*mettre la main sur les tetins*); as a consequence, she demands that this audacious lover shall be "very gravely and publicly punished" (*tres grievement puny de punition publique*). The lover replied that he had fallen into the water with her, but that, "falling, he had neither touched nor pinched her, nor had he had the time to do this, on account of the water which was over his head." Nevertheless, "the procurator of love in the matter of streams and forests stated that, by the ordinances, it was forbidden to play such a game by means of which one might feel breasts in the water," and concluded on this score, that the lover should be condemned to a heavy fine. The

latter replied that if his hand, without his knowing it, had touched the breast of his lady, it had only been in falling: "And there was some force in what he said." The tribunal admitted this excuse, but decided that the lover should give to the mistress a new robe, of green color, in recompense for the robe which the water had spoiled. In the IVth decree, there is also a lady who complains of her lover, by saying "that he had kissed her robe so rudely that he had torn it, and that her gorget had been torn so that one could see the top of her chemise." She demanded that this brutal lover be forbidden "to touch her any more or play with her without her consent." This request of the lady was granted, and the lover appealed in vain; the sentence was confirmed in a court of last resort, by the *mayor of the greenwood*.

The judgments of the Courts of Love were not the only ones which dealt with the bad manners of persons belonging to the jurisdiction of Knighthood; public opinion also had its judgments to pass, and its decrees spared neither birth, rank nor riches, where shameful and reprehensible actions were concerned. Good renown was an essential condition for men as well as women who desired that honor be shown them (*qu'on leur fit honneur*), and the most puissant lords, the greatest ladies, were not immune from the reproaches of the small gentry. "Those ladies who respect themselves desire to be respected," says Lacurne de Sainte-Palaye, "seeing to it well that no one is lacking in those marks of regard which are their right; but if, by an opposite conduct, they give cause for legitimate censure, they have reason to fear that they may not find knights ready to act in their behalf." The Chevalier de la Tour told his daughters in 1371, that a model of Chivalry named Messire Geoffroy had devoted himself to the repression of misconduct in women: "When he is riding through the fields and he beholds the château or the manor of any lady, he demands always to whom it belongs, and when someone says to him, 'it belongs to such and such a one,' if the lady harbors any reproach in her honor, when he comes to her door, he takes a little piece of chalk which he carries and writes on this door and makes on it a sign and then poops on it. On the contrary, when he passes the hostelry of a lady or damoiselle of good renown, if he is not in too great haste, he goes to see her and cries: 'My good friend, or my good lady or damoiselle, I pray God that He continue to keep you in this good and honorable path, and that you be numbered among the good women, for you well deserve to be praised and honored.' And in this

manner, the good women fear for themselves and are more firm in doing nothing by which they may lose their honor or their state.”* We do not know what could have been the nature of this sign which the Chevalier Geoffroy chalked up on the door of ill-famed women, inviting passers-by to salute with a poop the mistress of the place as a sign of contempt, a thing which the people never failed to do whenever they met a public woman in their path.

However, if public morality, thanks to Knighthood, made daily progress in all classes of society and filtered by degrees down to the lowest classes, Prostitution, hiding away in its own retreats, continued to disgrace the every-day speech and to find an outlet in the poems of the *trouvères*. These poets of the *langue d’oil* were not like the troubadours, knights and squires, brought up in the Courts of Love and early trained in the lessons of a fine gallantry; the *trouvères*, coming the most of them from the people, preserved in their works an original touch and made use in their compositions, which were full of verve, of gaiety and of malice, of the crude and gross language which they had learned in the homes of their parents. They called each thing by its own name, and they employed by preference the most popular expression, which was always the most picturesque. Their first auditors had been villagers, mechanics, merchants, *vilains*, in a word, and if these judges were connoisseurs in matters of pleasantry and a joyous frankness, they found nothing too gross nor too obscene in the way of details or of words. This was not all; the *trouvères*, who had left the plow or the shuttle in order to rhyme *romans*, *chansons*, *lais* and *fabliaux*, were given to a vagabond and disorderly life. They became almost all of them drunkards and debauchees, living with the jugglers, *jongleurs* and *canteors*, who were rightly looked upon as the most depraved of men. These *jongleurs*, at least ordinarily, did not themselves compose the verses which they chanted or recited; they merely repeated them with more or less *savoir faire* and intelligence; they accompanied their recital or their chant with pantomimes, dances, and clever tricks. The same actor undoubtedly sometimes united the distinct trades of *trouvère* and

*Translator’s Note:—J. U. N.: “As also men. Thus, Walter Von der Vogelweide:

Swer guotes wibes minne hat
Der schamt sich aller missetat

He who has a good woman’s love,
For every ill takes shame thereof.”

jongleur, but this was never other than an exception, all the more rare for the reason that the *trouvères* were not the object of so much contempt as were the *jongleurs* and the fiddlers. These latter, as a matter of fact, well deserved the contempt which was accorded them everywhere; they gave themselves to all vices, and especially to the most infamous ones. They recognized no social law; they wandered from city to city, from *château* to *château*, trailing after them a troop of jugglers and of children; in short, they kept a school of Prostitution. And yet, they were by no means rich; they were to be seen wandering, half naked, often with not a whole robe to their back, as they are depicted for us by a poet of the thirteenth century, *sans sorcot et sans cotelle*, their shoes *pertuissés*, and covered with vermin. These wretches, as one may rightly deduce, had all been reared in the Courts of Miracles; their manners and their language reflected the defilement of these courts, and it was they who, in running about the country, corrupted at once the language and the manners of the people. They had first made their way into respectable assemblages, into feasts and knightly festivals, where they recited the *chansons de geste*, those faery epics of the Round Table and of Charlemagne; they evoked thereby the enthusiasm of their audience, made up of lords and ladies, who did not tire of hearing of arms and of love. There were always, in these old rhymed romances, certain scenes which were sufficiently suggestive and certain licentious terms, but the intention of the poet was always irreproachable, and the *jongleur* did not add, by his jests and his grimaces, to the indecency of the picture. The bard was generously paid; he was given robes and new cloaks; he was lodged, along with his *varlets* and his animals (for he carried with him also dogs, apes and birds, trained to do various tricks), in the *château*, and when he departed with his purse well furnished, he was invited to return by being offered the stirrup-cup.

This paradise of *jonglerie* became an inferno under the reign of St. Louis; the *trouvères* still composed their *chansons de geste*, containing from twelve to twenty thousand verses, but the *jongleurs* no longer learned these by heart, no longer recited them; a notable change had occurred in public taste; there was no longer an eagerness at table to listen to the marvelous deeds (*gestes*) of the Knights of King Arthur and the Emperor Charlemagne; one preferred to read in the silence of the *retrait* or study. The *jongleurs* adapted themselves readily to this whim of fashion, the result of the influence of the Crusades; they drop-

ped their old baggage and no longer recited anything but *contes*, lively and devout. The *trouvères*, those at least who drew their inspiration from the people, responded with good will to the pleasant reception which was accorded their *fabliaux*, and they invented a great number of these, one more joyous than another, which were widely popularized to the sounds of the hurdy-gurdy and the *rote*, in all companies where the old Gallic laughter was still to be heard. But the abuse of this species of entertainment soon caused it to be condemned and proscribed; the *trouvères* no longer put any limit on the license of their compositions, and the *jongleurs* exaggerated the obscenity to a still greater degree; *jongleurs* and *trouvères* were looked upon as tools of the Devil, and to them was imputed, possibly with justice, a new development of Prostitution. And yet, the pious Louis IX had protected the fiddlers' art (*la ménestrandie*), since, after his dinner and before hearing grace, he was in the habit of giving audience to the *menestries*, who would play the hurdy-gurdy before him; but this encouragement was given only to music and not to the *fabliaux*, for, according to an ancient text, adopted in many editions of Joinville, "he expelled from his realm all *besteleurs* and other players at sleight-of-hand through whom there came to the people much lasciviousness." This lasciviousness was not displeasing to certain nobles, who, despite the chaste instructions of Chivalry, were passionately fond of "gay science" (*gaie science*), and who never closed the doors of their manors to the most debauched *jongleurs*; but in general, the poor fiddlers were banished from the château, and the sound of their instruments, announcing their presence at the moat of a seigniorial residence produced no other result than did the barking of dogs. According to a facetious apologue written in Latin at this period (see the *Fabliaux* of Legrand d'Aussy, Volume IV, page 357), God, in creating the world, placed in it three sorts of men, the nobles, the clergy, and the villains (*vilains*). He gave to the first the land, to the second the tithes and alms, and to the third labor and misery; but dissatisfied with this division, the fiddlers and the *ribauds* simultaneously presented a petition to God, demanding that he alter their fate and grant them the means of livelihood: "The Lord," says the author of the apologue, "charged the nobles with feeding the fiddlers and the priests with entertaining the harlots. The latter have obeyed God and zealously fulfilled the law which was imposed upon them; and so they shall undoubtedly be saved. As to gentlemen who have no care of those

who have been confined to them, they can expect no salvation." The jongleurs, being no longer received in the château, suddenly forgot the *chansons de geste* and respectable poetry; they had found a public that was easier to divert and less scrupulous as to the nature of its amusements. They now knocked at the doors of bourgeois and of merchants; they came to take their seats in taverns, and in the house of the good *populaire*, who received them gleefully, and who did not smile from the wrong side of his mouth at the licentious stories which they would relate after drinking.

These *contes*, a precious monument of the imagination and the sense of humor of our ancestors, constituted a considerable body of poetry, of which only a part has been published in the original by Barbazan and translated by Legrand d'Aussy. It is from this smutty repertory that Boccaccio, Ariosto, La Fontaine and countless other modern poets and romancers have drawn those comical subjects and ideas, which they have merely given a new form. "The collection of *fabliaux*," says M. Émile de la Bédollière, "abounds in peccant sallies, in droll inventions, and in an infectious gaiety, but it is frequently marked by a disgusting obscenity; the dirtiest words in the French language here appear to have been scattered prodigally and at the dictates of fancy; the most vulgar functions of the human body are here the subject of gross pleasantries; the most secret parts of the body are here named in terms at which the prostitutes of today would blush." As evidence of this general appreciation of the *fabliaux* of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the ingenious author of the *Histoire des Mœurs et de la Vie Privée des Français* quotes the titles of few, which he chooses from the edition of Barbazan: *Fabliau de la m. . . . ; une femme pour cent hommes; de Charlot le juif qui chia en la pel dou lievre; du Chevalier qui fesoit parler les c. . . . et les c. . . . ; de l'anel qui fesoit les v. . . . grand et roides; du vilain à la c. . . . noire; d'une pucelle qui ne pooit oïr parlor de f. . . . , qu'elle ne se pas mast, etc.** Barbazan has omitted, in the manuscripts where they still remain unpublished, a number of *fabliaux* the titles of which promise stories still more smutty in character, if that is possible; M. de la Bédollière records a few of these titles, from the *Ms., codex 1830, Bibl. Nationale; de la male vieille qui conchia la preude feme; du fouteor; du conin;* from *Ms. 7218: du c. . . . et du c. . . . de honte et de puterie; du v. . . . et de la c. . . . ; du c. . . . qui fut fait à la besche, etc.* In order to form

*Translator's Note:—These titles, it goes without saying, are too free for translation.

an idea of this rowdy literature, we must peruse some of the freest stories of La Fontaine, who delighted in reading the *trouvères*; but one cannot form a true idea of the monstrously libertine language of these poets, who held a Court of Muses in bad houses, except by comparing their waggish works with those of Glécourt, Piron and Robbé, those brazen *trouvères* of the eighteenth century.

"It is evident," says M. de la Bédollière (Volume III, op. cit., page 341), "that our ancestors daily uttered, without any feeling of immodesty, words which we have proscribed; but they were not strangers to delicacy, and the scandalous *contes* inspired a merited disgust in decent folk."* In the *Jeu de Robin et Marion*, a little comedy mingled with songs, performed in the thirteenth century, the author of which, Adam de la Halle, was one of the most esteemed *trouvères* of his time, one of the characters of the piece named Gauthier, under pretext of reciting a *chanson de geste*, intones a smutty refrain; Robin interrupts him, saying to him in a tone of reproof:

*Ah! Gauthier, je n'a voiel plus; fi!
Dites, serez-vous toujours teus (tel)?
Vous estes un ord (sale) menestreus!***

The fiddlers and the jugglers appeared to be in a conspiracy to propagate this indecent language, as they play and sing the compositions of the *trouvères*; and the latter, with a literary reputation as models in the *art de rithmer et de bien dire*, exercised a sorry influence over the written as well as the spoken language; for whoever wrote, in prose or in verse, felt authorized by their example to employ the most indecent words, and complacently to make use of the most immodest images. The *trouvères*, in their loftiest flights, did not restrain themselves from this bad habit of mingling with the poetic language the idiom of the taverns and the brothels. The author of the celebrated romance of *Partenopes de Blois* gives us a picture which would be more in place in a *fabliau*:

*Translator's Note:—J. U. N. calls attention to "1601," attributed to Mark Twain.

**Translator's Note:—

Ah! Gauthier you give me pain!
Shall this be always your refrain?
Yours is a dirty minstrel strain!

*Il li a les cuisses ouverts,
Et quant les soles i a mises,
Les flors del pucel a prises.**

The author of the romance of *Garin le Lehorain* does not attribute a language that is any more decent to his knights; one of the latter cries, in an access of pruriency:

*Si la tenoie, par mon chief a naisil,
La demoisel coucheroie avec mi!***

Occasionally, the trouvère attacked a holy subject, but he made no change in his vocabulary; thus, in the *Miracles de Nostre-Dame*, the poet-translator who does not appear to have been elevated by his subject, is pleased to describe the episodes of a wedding night, in which, by grace of the immaculate Virgin, the husband plays but a sorry role:

*La nuit première, en son beau lit,
Faire en cuida tout son delit,
Li espoux, es c. . . de sa fame;
Mais si la garda Nostre-Dame. . . .
Chascune nuit que il anuite,
Touz fois revient à la meslée,
Mais la porte est si fort peslée
Si fort serrée et si fort close,
Qu' entrer ne puet pour nule chose . . .****

*Translator's Note:—

Her thighs he has outspread,
And having done what seemeth good,
He takes the flowers of maidenhood. (J. U. N.)

**Translator's Note:—Freely (and prudently):

If I but held her on my knee,
The demoisel should sleep with me. (J. U. N.)

***Translator's Note:—

In his fine bed on that first night,
He does his duty, and does it right.
He is insane about his wife,
And if Our Lady guard his life,
He will return, all brave and bright,
And newly girded for the fray.
The door is barred in every way—
He's seen to that, that not a thing
May dally with his dallying. (J. U. N.)

The poets and writers who did not possess the privilege of *bouches en cour*, that is to say, who did not dine at the tables of kings and princes, were little versed in making a distinction between language which was decent and that which was not; they ignored the real value of words, and they did not suspect that a language had many styles, each appropriate to the character of a particular work. A feeling for literary decency did not even touch them when they left a profane for a sacred subject. One of these trouvères it was, undoubtedly, who was charged with the task of translating the Bible into French for the use of a Prince of France. He carried out his task with all the conscientiousness of which he was capable, and yet he made no scruple of introducing into his literal translation a multitude of words, which, while they had been employed in Hebrew by Moses, were not admissible in the Holy Scriptures done into French; and yet, this strange translation was copied out upon vellum by a scribe, was adorned with miniatures and given a beautiful binding. It was in this state that it came into the hands of the kings of France, who for many generations read the Bible in this beautiful manuscript, and who were not scandalized at meeting there, on every page, enormities like those which M. Paulan Paris has extracted in his excellent *Catalogue des Manuscrits Français de la Bibliothèque du Roi*: "And another time God said to Abraham: Each male among you shall be circumcised, and you shall circumcise the flesh of your p. . . ; let this be a sign of covenant between me and you. Then Abraham led forth Ishmael, his son, and all the freemen of his house, and all the males and all the herdsmen of his house, and he circumcised the flesh of their p. . . . (Chapter 17, verses 10 to 23). Our Lord surely remembered Rachel, and opened her c. . . ; and she conceived and bore a son (Chapter 30, verse 22). They were incensed at the deflowering of their sister. . . . and they replied: Should they have used our sister as a whore" (Chapter 3, verse 13 and 31)! This French Bible has been preserved (No. 6, 701) among the manuscripts of the Bibliothèque Nationale, and one is astonished in reading it, to reflect that it was not translated for the use of the *clapiers* of Glatigne, of Tyron, and of Brisemiche, but to aid the devotions of the Most Christian Kings. Moreover, the moralists and preachers who frequently addressed the people were not any more reserved in the choice of their expressions, which they took from the mire to apply to holy or edifying things.* St. Bernard thought he was

*Translator's Note:—The old *prêcheurs libres* were, as a matter of fact, Rabelais'

still preaching in Latin, when he exclaimed energetically in one of his sermons: "An old woman who leads a stinking life of the body is a whore (*putain*)!" Another preacher of the same period, in a discourse on humility, took for text these words of the royal prophet: *Laus mea sordet eo quod sit in ore meo*; and he interpreted them thus: "My praise is but *merde* and *conchiure*!" The language of Prostitution had spread everywhere, even into the Church, which had the wisdom to forbid the faithful to read holy books indecently travestied in the vulgar manner.

literary forebears. Read some of the old sermons—of Olivier Maillard, Jean Bourgeois or Jean Raulin. One might also refer to Calvin's pulpit language ("*merdailles*", etc.) or to Luther's *Tischrede*.

CHAPTER LVI

KNIGHTHOOD had certainly put down the excesses of Prostitution, but it was powerless to do away with the institution. From the end of the twelfth century, a happy amelioration was perceptible in public and private morals, despite the perduring and corrupting effect of popular poetry, which had ended by replacing heroic poetry. There were still, undoubtedly, many excesses among the nobles and the lower classes; but ordinarily, the former no longer set an example of the most abominable sort of perversity for the common people. Thus, although the habits of the Orient had been introduced into the army of the Crusaders, vice against nature was no longer as frequent as it had been at the court of Normandy in 1120. According to Guillaume de Nangis, a prelate no longer dared brazenly advertise his turpitude like that Bishop of Orléans, named Jean, who in 1092, had himself called Flora by his effeminates (*concubii*) and who, in the public squares would listen as infamous youths devoted to masculine debauchery, sang of an evening hideous songs composed in his honor (*quidam enim sui concubii*, says the venerable Ives de Chartres in a letter addressed to Pope Urban II, *appellant eum Floram multas rhythmicas cantilenas de eo composuerunt quae a foebis adolescentibus sicut nostis miseriam terrae illius, per urbes Franciae in plateis et compitis, cantitantur*). The satiric writers undoubtedly were none too kind to the vices of their age; they accused the lords of avarice, pride, cruelty, and gluttony, but they did not reproach them, like the historians of the 11th century, with living in an abyss of filth (*impudicitatis barathrum*). Orderic Vital cried out with a groan "that license no longer knew any bounds, and that the people had forgotten the example of the heroes in giving themselves to the most unbridled Prostitution." He was tireless in cursing the iniquity of his age (*sevitia iniqui temporis*, he says, in Book III of his *Chronicle*); and yet, amid the frightful license of the eleventh century, the Church was laboring actively at the reform of the monastic orders, and Knighthood, an institution attributed to an old hermit who had stepped down from a throne (this tradition was probably but a symbol), had begun to regenerate the nobility by correcting their bad manners.

It is to the salutary influence of Knighthood that we must assign

the conversion of the greatest sinner the eleventh century produced. Among so many "sons of the Devil" (*filz du diable*), as they were called, Guillaume or William, the ninth of the name, Duke of Aquitaine and Count of Poitiers, was the Goliath of Prostitution, if we may make use of a Biblical figure in describing the enormous debaucheries of this Prince, whom M. Emilé de la Bedollière describes as the *Joconde du onzième siècle*. According to the opinion of a contemporary troubadour (*Choix de Poésies Orig. des Troubadours*, Vol. V, p. 115), he was the greatest deceiver of women and the most arrant libertine that the world knew (*si fo uns dels maiors trichadors de dampnas et anet lonc temps ter lo mon per enganar las domnas*). All means were good to him when there was a conquest to be made; he did not disdain to spread his nets for his most humble vassals, and he had a particular taste for nuns, whom he frequently seduced in their convents. We have already mentioned his plan for a bad-house constructed on the model of the abbeys, and destined to receive a congregation of public women under the direction of the greatest rakes of Poitou. We do not know what prevented him from putting this plan into execution, since he had gone so far as to construct the abbatial edifice. He was greatly taken with the beautiful Countess of Châtellerault, named Malborgiane, and he lived in concubinage with her, after having dismissed his legitimate wife. He had the portrait of his mistress painted on his shield, saying that he desired to bear it in battle, as she bore him in the bed (*dictitans se illam velle ferre in proelio. sicut illa portabat eum in triclinis*). William of Malmesbury, who relates in his *Chronicle* the licentious eccentricities of the Duke of Aquitaine, gives us to understand that this terrible fornicator did not pride himself on being faithful to the Viscountess, whom he none the less passionately loved. On the night of Holy Saturday, he was in a church listening to a sermon on the resurrection of Christ. "What a fable! What a lie!" he cried, bursting into laughter. "If that is your opinion," the preacher responded, "why are you here?" "I stay here," replied the impious Duke, "to look at the pretty ones who come to keep Easter eve." One day he fell ill, and a monk who was caring for him advised him to prepare for a good death. "You would like, I can see," replied the dying man, "for me to give my goods to parasites, that is to say, to the priests! They shall not have a single sou. As to my debaucheries, I have nothing to repent; many who are very wise have assured me that all women are and must be common, and that to

yield to their caresses is but an inconsequential sin." He did not die in final impenitence, for, under the influence of Knighthood, he suddenly passed from a gross materialism to spiritual contemplation, from incredulity to faith, and the scandal attached to his unclean life gave way to the edifying practices of asceticism; he became a soldier of Christ and expiated his sins by a striking repentance. He was then old and could no longer continue the *train d'amour* of his youth, even by having recourse to those factitious excitations which medical charlatanism offered old libertines, and of which the learned Arnould de Villeneuve has preserved the recipes under this heading: *Ad virgam erigendam*. Guillaume d'Aquitaine, in his youth, had carried his sensual researches very far, and rumor had accorded to him the honor of various erotic inventions, which are also to be found in the works of Arnould de Villeneuve, who had the modesty to translate them into Latin (*Ut desiderium et dulcedo in coitu augmentetur.—Ut mulier habeat dulcedinem in coitu. . . .*).*

The Crusades were the finest moments of Chivalry, and yet it cannot be denied that this prodigious mobilization of men of all ages, of all ranks and of all countries, had nourished the corrupting germs of Prostitution. The Abbé Fleury, speaking of these innumerable armies which burst upon the Orient, says with reason that they were worse than ordinary armies. "All vices were prevalent in them, both those which the pilgrims had brought from their own countries, and those which they had learned in the country of the stranger." We have reported, after the statements of Joinville, that in the first Crusade of St. Louis, the latter's barons "set up their brothels" (*tenoient leurs bordaux*) about the royal tent. Things must have been worse in the preceding Crusades, especially in the first, which set all Europe on end. "The Crusaders," says Albert of Aix, "conducted themselves in a gross manner, being senseless and uncontrollable, until carnal love came to extinguish in them the flame of divine love. They had in their ranks a throng of women wearing the habits of men, and they traveled together without distinction of sex, trusting to the chances of a frightful promiscuity." The author of the *Gesta Urbani II* limits himself to stating the fact: *Innumerabiles feminas secum habere non timuerunt, quae naturalem habitum in virilem nefaire mutaverunt, cum quibus fornicaverunt: (Hist. des Gaules Vol. XIV, p. 684)*. Albert of Aix adds some details which permit us to divine others still more

*Translator's Note:—Cf. Dr. Robey's "Art of Love."

scandalous: "The pilgrims did not abstain from illicit unions and the pleasures of the flesh; they gave themselves without relaxation to all the excesses of the table, diverting themselves with married women or young girls, who had only left hearths in order to yield to the same follies, and to hurl themselves imprudently into every species of vanity." In order to understand the sort of vanities of which the chronicler is speaking, we must visualize that mass of vagabonds and fanatics violating women and dishonoring the hospitality which they received in Hungary, (*Puellis eripiebatur, violentiâ ablata, virginitas; dehonestabantur conjugia*). It was not without cause that the hand of God was laid upon these wretches who "had sinned in his eyes, by wallowing in all the defilements of the flesh." Not a third of this undisciplined horde, stained with all imaginable crimes, arrived in Palestine.

The Courts of Miracles and the houses of Prostitution had furnished their obscene contingent for the army of the Crusaders, in which the *ribauds*, the beggars (*trudennes*) and the vagabonds (*thafurs*) formed redoubtable bands, including many lost women who had taken up the Cross with their lovers. All the armies of the Middle Ages were invariably followed by a horde of unemployed *goujats* and *ribaudes*, who accompanied the baggage train and pillaged it en route. The soldier, or *soudoyer*, could not dispense with this embarrassing, and, at the same time, annoying retinue; the women served them as a pastime, while the men made themselves useful upon occasion by bearing bundles and by pillaging the country through which the troops passed. The Crusaders did not renounce their military manners in vowing themselves to the deliverance of the Holy Sepulchre, and when women were lacking in Palestine, where the Mohammedan religion was opposed to all illicit commerce with Christians, reinforcements of Christian women were sent forth from Europe, and these contributed in their manner to the triumph of the Crusades. An Arabic historian, Em-ad-Eddin, reports that, during the siege of Saint Jean-d'Acre, in 1189, "three hundred pretty French women, who had been brought to the Isles, arrived upon a boat for the solace of the French soldiers, to whom they devoted themselves entirely; for the French soldiers would not go into battle if they were deprived of women." The same historian, quoted by Hammer in the latter's *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman*, adds that the example of the Franks was contagious for their enemies, who also desired to have ladies of joy in their army, where such a rule had never before been tolerated. This multitude of women in the rear

of the French armies was a common thing down to the end of the sixteenth century. Geoffroy, monk of Vigéois, estimates at fifteen hundred the number of concubines who followed the *ost* of the king in 1180, while the adornments of these royal courtezans (*meretrices regiae*) had cost an enormous sum (*quarum ornamenta inestimabili thesauro comparata sunt*). This chronicler undoubtedly is speaking only of those women who were immediately subject to the *roi des ribauds*, and who were only permitted to practice their vile trade upon paying a revenue to this officer of the royal house. As for the free and unauthorized *ribaudes*, their number must have been at least twenty times larger, especially in the irregular armies, like those of the Crusades, and like those *Grandes Compagnies* who hired themselves to the one who was able to pay for them and who could promise them their quota of booty. The monk of Vigéois enumerates the different sorts of soldiers who, at the end of the twelfth century, like a cloud of locusts, ravaged the country through which they passed: *Primo Basculi, postmodum Theuthonici, Flandrenses; et, ut rustice loquar, Brabansons, Hannuyers, Asperes, Pailler, Nadar, Turlau, Vales, Roma, Cotarel, Catalan, Arragones, quorum dentes et arma omnem Aquitaniam corroserunt*. Each of these voracious bands drew after it a throng of prostitutes, whose numbers were constantly increased, and who took part in the pillaging of cities sacked by the army.

We meet everywhere, in the military history of France and of the other nations of Europe, with these debauched women following the armies in campaigns; the rear guard was always made up of women of this sort and their companions, *ribuads* and *goujats*, for whom, according to a popular expression, nothing was too hot nor too heavy to be carried away.* This rear guard, inconvenient and unprepossessing as it was, was often almost as numerous as the rest of the army. We read, in the *Chronique de Modène*, written by Jean de Bazano (see the great collection of Muratori, Vol. XV, Col. 600), that a German captain named Garnier, who had invaded at the head of three thousand five hundred lances the territory of Modena, of Reggio, and of Mantua at the beginning of the year 1342, was accompanied by a thousand prostitutes, *mauvais garçons* and *ribaudes* (*mille meretrices, ragazzii et rubaldi*). The chiefs of war and their captains, however doughty they may have been as knights, were powerless against this Prostitu-

Translator's Note:—The expression, which is from Froissart, will be found in Rabelais Book First, Chapter XVII. and Chapter XXVII.

tion in their camps; their troops would have revolted and refused to serve under the banners of one who did not afford protection to those light women destined for the "solace" (*soulas*) of the soldiers. Jeanne d'Arc alone, who had a horror of bad women, although the English called her the *Putain des Armignats* (see Michelet's *History of France*, Vol. V, p. 75), by reason of her divine mission, was able to expel from the King's army all these despicable creatures. She first of all ordered her soldiers to go to confession, "and made them send away their women" (*fillettes*), says the anonymous author of the *Mémoires* concerning this chaste heroine. "It is known," related Jean Chartier, in his *History of Charles VII*, "that, after the day of Patay, the said Jehanne la Pucelle issued a proclamation that no man of her company was to keep any infamous woman or concubine." Custom, however, was stronger than will, and a few of these women who felt that they were supported by their lovers, endeavored to brave the orders of la Pucelle. The later, when Charles VII was reviewing the army at Sanarre, before his departure for Rheims, perceived "a number of debauched women who prevented any men of arms from being diligent in the service of the King." And she drew her sword of Fierbois and fell upon these miserable ones, laying about her with so good a will that the sword broke over their shoulders. Charles VII was very annoyed by this incident, and remarked to Jehanne that it would have been better to take a stick to strike them with, rather than to lose such a sword which had come to her by miracle. La Pucelle understood clearly enough that the presence of a woman was inimical to discipline in an army, and she herself had donned men's clothing in order not to excite the carnal concupiscence of her companions at arms. "It seems to me," she remarked, "that in this state I shall better preserve my virginity of thought and deed." Her virginity, the truth is, received no taint, although a number of great lords were "resolved to know if they might have her carnal company;" but when they presented themselves to her, *gentiment habillée*, "all evil intentions fell away from them."

The ruling of Jean d'Arc against the *ribaudes* of the militia could not, in the nature of things survive her; and this was but an exception in the life of men-at-arms, who did not for long part company with their concubines. It is possible that this large number of dissolute women permanently attached to an army had occasionally a favorable influence in the ordinary circumstances surrounding the taking of a

city, for the soldier, knowing that his mistress was amongst the public women of the army, was less ardent in outraging and violating his women prisoners. However this may have been, the number of amorous women enrolled, so to speak, under the banner of a captain, diminished or increased in ratio to the success or failure of the expedition. In an age when pillage was an inevitable condition of warfare, these prostitutes claimed the better part of the booty. The better equipped, the better provisioned, the better paid an army was, the more Prostitution flourished on all sides. Thus, the fine army which Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, led in person into the country of the Swiss in 1476, was amply furnished with a feminine cohort and, after the defeat of Granson, the conquerors found in the Duke's camp, as Philippe de Comines tells us, "great bands of varlets, tradesmen and prostitutes." But the Swiss cared little for prisoners of this sort; for Comines adds, "the gentlemen of the League took each his fill of pikes, culverins, armor and other precious trifles; but as regards the two thousand courtezans, joyous *donzelles* reflecting that such merchandise would be of little profit to them, they permitted these to flee away across the fields." Despite this indifference to the Flemish and Burgundian courtezans, the Swiss did not lead under their own banners a life any more austere than that of their enemies; for in times of peace, there were to be found in their villages, at the expense of the community, a certain number of prostitutes who, in times of war, were bodily attached to the companies and bands of each canton. (*Rec. d'Edits et d'Ordonn. Royaux.* by Neron and Girard, 1720, in-f., Vol. I, p. 643.)

Let us come back to Chivalry, which did not always set an example of chastity and continency. The knights, who made an ethereal sort of love to dames and damoiselles, and who obtained from the latter none but decent gifts, sometimes kisses, but rarely what was called the "gift of love and mercy" (*don d'amour en sa merci*)—the knights made up for these privations with servant maids and *fillettes*. It was even one of the customs of hospitality to "garnish the couch" (*garnir la couche*) of a knight who demanded asylum in a château. Lacurne de Sainte-Palaye cites, apropos of this courteous custom, a very curious extract from a *fabliau* (*Ms. du Roi*, No. 7,615, fol. 210), in which a lady who has received a knight in her house is unwilling to go to sleep until she has sent him a bed companion.*

**Translator's Note*:—Guest prostitution again.

*Et la comtesse à chief se pose
 Apele un soun (sienne) pucelle,
 La plus cortoise et la plus belle;
 A consoil (en secret) li dis: Belle amie,
 Alez tost, ne vous ennuit miel
 Avec ce chevalier gesir (coucher) . . .
 Si le servez, s'il est metiers (besoin).
 Je isa lassa volontiers,
 Que ja ne laissasse pour honte,
 Ne fust pour monseigneur le conte
 Qui n'est pas encore endormiz . . . **

The *dame châtelaine* was, undoubtedly, no stickler for convention, and she must have learned a lesson in easy manners from the reading of the *Art d'Amour* composed by the trouvère Guiart (*Ms. du Roi*, No. 7, 615, fol. 178 et sec.), a poem that contains the most dissolute instructions to be found anywhere. We may presume that such hospitable customs as these were not to be met with in all the châteaux. A poet of the thirteenth century gives us assurance upon this point, and the manner in which he attacks Prostitution in the cities permits us to suppose that he was tacitly comparing it with the decency of knightly manners. Following is an interesting passage which Lacurne de Saint-Palaye has drawn from a manuscript of the *Bibliothèque Nationale Fonds du Roi*, No. 7615, fol. 140).

*Qui reson voudroit faire! l'on devoit, par sainte Gille!
 Riche femme qui sert de baval et de guile (tromperie),
 Et qui pour gaignier vent son corps et aville (avilit)*

*Translator's Note:—

The Countess directs her serving man
 To summon a comely maid,
 A courteous wench, but not too staid;
 And to the girl she whispers low:
 Listen, dear friend, I would have you go
 And sleep with this bold knight;
 Satisfy his need, my dear,
 For he is a gallant cavalier,
 And I would serve him myself, I vow,
 But it is not safe just now,
 Since my lord the Count sleeps light.

*Chacier hors de la ville aussi com un mesel (lépreux),
 S'en soulit (si on avoit coutume) maintes femmes, par maintes achoisons,
 Chacier hors de la ville, c'estoit droiz et resons:
 Or est venu le temps et or ests la resons.
 Plus a partout bordiaux qu'il n'a autres mesons. . . .**

The municipal laws, as we have said, placed a restraint on Prostitution, and the nobility, the state of whose manners had been generally improved by Chivalry, had come to be distinguished by those same manners, which were more regular and more decent, at least in appearance, than those of the bourgeoisie. But the bourgeoisie and the people grew better in their turn, while Chivalry was falling into decay and the nobles were falling into all those excesses which they had avoided up to then; the latter still prided themselves, however, upon being as good knights as their predecessors. It was under the reign of Charles VI that this decay of knightly manners set in. A poet of this reign, Eustache Deschamps, compares the conduct of the knights of old to those of his contemporaries:

*Les chevaliers estoient vertueux
 Et pour amours plains de chevalerie,
 Loyaux, secrez, friskes et gracieux:
 Chascuns avoit lors sa dame s'amie,
 Et vivoient liement (joyeusement);
 On les amoit aussi tres loyalement,
 Et ne janglois (jasait), ne mesdisoit en rien,
 Or m'esbahy quant chascun jangle et ment,
 Car meilleur temps fut le temps ancien!**

**Translator's Note:—*Mr. Nicolson's version:

"Whoso would find the cause of this must seek it—by Saint Giles!—
 In every fawning damosel whose trade is vending wiles
 And who for gain of gold, of gold, her body's bloom defiles—
 Drive her beyond the town to live with lazars and exiles!
 Oh, many will be the manners while many shall be the dames,
 Let them be driven beyond the town who flaunt their harlots' names,
 For gold is god to the women, gold is the end of their aims.
 Let them be herded in bordels now and hidden with all their shames!"

**Translator's Note:—*

The knights were a very virtuous race,
 And full of chivalry in love,
 Loyal, secret, of jovial grace,
 Each would die for his lady friend's glove;

The complaints of Eustache Deschamps were but too well justified in view of the orgies of the court, where Charles VI and his brother, the Duke of Orléans, who prided themselves on upholding true Chivalry, appear to have forgotten their own virtuous precepts. The tourney celebrated in 1389, at Saint-Denis, in honor of the King of Sicily and his brother, who were armed knights, ended in a hideous saturnalia of which the abbey was the scene. The monk of Saint-Denis, in his *Chronicle of Charles VI*, has not seen fit to pass over in silence the debauches of the fourth night. "The lords," he says, "in turning night into day and in giving themselves to all the excesses of table, were led by drunkenness into such debaucheries that, without respect for the presence of the King, a number of them defiled the sanctity of the religious house by abandoning themselves to debauchery and adultery (*ad. inconcessan venerem et adultria nefanda prolapsi sunt*).

The religious houses, at this period, possessed manners as bad as those of the king's court; the Church had fallen into the same degree of decadence as Knighthood, and all society appeared to be headed for perdition. We have no desire to enter the convents to lift the veil which covered the vices of monks and nuns. Prostitution had taken possession of the Lord's house, as it had of the great of the earth. The preachers in those days would frequently repeat the words of the Angel in the Apocalypse: "Come and I will show you the condemnation of the great Prostitute, who is seated upon the great waters, with whom the kings of the earth are corrupted, and who has made drunk with the wine of Prostitution the inhabitants of the earth." Nothing, as a matter of fact, could portray the abominations of the reign of Charles VI, when clergy, nobility and the people vied with one another in perversity and turpitude. What must have been the life of the court, when the life of the convents was as deplorable as Nicolas de Clémenges, archdeacon of Bayeux, pictures it for us in his treatise *De Corrupto Statu Ecclesiae*: "Speaking of the virgins consecrated to the Lord, we must describe all the infamies of the places of Prostitution, all the ruses and effrontery of the courtezans, all their execrable works of fornication and of incest; for, I beg of you, what are today (about the year 1400) the monasteries of women if not sanctuaries devoted to

And they lived together most royally,
 Loving the ladies loyally,
 With never a slander and never a brawl,
 But living most royally, loyally,
 For the good old days were the best of all!

the cult of Venus, rather than to the worship of the true God; if not impure resorts, where undisciplined youth abandons itself to all the disorders of lust, so that now, taking the veil for a young girl, is the same as exposing her publicly in a place of abomination!"* Nicolas de Clémenges carries to the point of hyperbole his criticism of monastic manners, but the demoralization of the ecclesiastics was only too striking, and it would be hard to say whether it was the Church which had demoralized Chivalry or Chivalry which had demoralized the Church. Dulaure, whose statements are generally to be suspected, adduces respectable authority in sketching for us this picture of clerical and knightly manners. "The prelates and the subordinate priests went clad ordinarily in secular habits, wore the sword, jousted in tournaments, frequented wine-shops and kept concubines. The priests and curates were occupied in judiciary employments, loaned money at usury, and indulged in debauchery and excesses at table. In certain important dioceses, the vicars received permission to permit adultery during the space of one year; in others, one might purchase the right to fornicate with impunity throughout the course of a lifetime; the purchaser was quit of all obligations, by paying each year, to the officials, a quart of wine, and when age no longer permitted him the use of his privilege, he was none the less required to pay the tax." It was in the decretals of the popes that officialdom found this strange power which it arrogated to itself with regard to the sin of impurity. The canon, *De Dilectissimis* exorts Christians to the practice of this axiom: *Everything is common among friends*; even women, it was added. An audacious request was even presented to Pope Sixtus IV to obtain his permission to permit the infamous sin during the canicular months, and Sixtus IV wrote at the bottom of the petition: "Let it be done as requested" (*Hist. de France*, by the Abbé Velly, Vol. V, p. 10 and following).

It is a truly remarkable fact that the royal and municipal ordinances against Prostitution were never more frequent nor more severe than during this period. No mercy was shown towards public women, even while decency and modesty appeared to have been banished, and while dissolute vestments alone were the fashion, in spite of all the edicts. The women had adopted once more, along with shoes à la

*Translator's Note:—Cf. Aretino, *I Ragionamenti*, "The Life of Nuns," the story called "The Novice's Feast": "If you had lovers before, what made a nun of you?" (Putnam translation.)

poulaine,* those obscene ornaments which they wore as decorations in the twelfth century at the court of Normandy, according to Orderic Vital; and the ornaments in question were of still greater length and more suggestive. The women, it is true, did not dare to adopt the accessories to this villainous footgear; but, on the other hand, they had robes that were split or elevated, and which permitted a glimpse of the leg and even of the naked buttocks; as to the throat, they revealed that down to the breast. The author of the *Chastoiement des Dames*, Robert de Blois, reproaches them for these immodest fashions.

*Aucune lesse differmée
Sa poitrine, pource c'on doine
Comme fetement sa chair planchoie;
Une autre lesse tout de gré
Sa chair apparoir au costé:
Une ses jambes trop descuevre.
Prud hom ne loe pas cette oeuvre.***

The ceremonies of the Church, the processions especially, displayed the same immodesty of vestments. One might see, in the processions and the public penitential demonstrations, men and women entirely naked: "Among these penitents," says the prejudiced author of the *Histoire de Paris*, "some wore chains of stones on their shifts; others, without shifts, were flagellated or pricked on the rump with needles." Here Dulaure is inventing nothing, exaggerating nothing, and he may send his reader with confidence to the *Glossary* of Ducange and Carpentier (to the words, *penitentiae*, *processiones*, *villaniae*, *lapides catenatos ferre*, *putagium*, *naticae*, etc.). We may suppose that the penitents who followed the processions in a state of complete nudity, and who had themselves pricked with needles, must have been prostitutes, as well as those who wore stones on their shifts. Such, as a matter of fact, were the customary punishments which secular justice

*Translator's Note:—Pointed-toed shoes, mentioned in Rabelais.

**Translator's Note:—Mr. Nicolson renders:

"One lets the dress divide
To show her breasts and show
The wanton flesh below;
Another opens wide
The seam to bare her side;
And one her leg discovers.
This gets nor lays nor lovers."

decreed with regard to adulteresses and women of evil life. Dulaure furnishes us a memorable example, which he borrows from the criminal records of the Parliament of Paris (*Registre VIII*). Anne Piedeleu, an amorous woman, kept a place of debauchery in the rue Saint-Martin; she was, therefore, a violator of the provost's ordinances; and the provost who was then in office (1373), the famous Hugues Aubriot, saw to it that these ordinances were executed with much vigor. The bourgeoisie of the neighborhood went to denounce Anne Piedeleu to the provost, and at once the sergeants proceeded to dislodge the former, showing her some indulgence, however, since she was not even led to prison. She must have felt that she had the support of some personage capable of facing it out with the provost, for she lodged a counter complaint against this magistrate, accusing him of a number of crimes and producing false witnesses in order to undo him. Parliament, in the month of February, 1374, upon the representations of the king's advocate condemned Anne Piedeleu to be promenaded through the city, wholly nude and wearing upon her head a crown of parchment, on which was written this word: *faussaire* (perjuress). She was led in this state to the pillory of the Halles, where she was exposed for two hours to the gaze of the people; she only left prison to be banished from Paris and from the realm. Promenades of this sort must have been frequent enough, and the populace ran to witness them with an excess of glee. As the *ribaudes* and the *maquerelles* who had been given over to the indecent curiosity of the idlers of Paris went shivering with cold and frequently coughing as they traversed the mud of the streets through the inclemencies of the weather, the spectators, and especially the children, were in the habit of singing a song composed for the occasion. This smutty song, which remained for long in the memory of the people, ended with this refrain, as reported in the *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris*:

*Votre c. . . a la toux, commère,
Votre c. . . a la toux, la toux!**

It was quite natural for the most impudent of the women who were thus led to the pillory to respond with insults, insults not lacking in implications and maledictions. Also, when an epidemic cough made its appearance in Paris during the winter of the year 1413, those who

**Translator's Note*:—"Your——has a cough, old lady, your——has a cough."

had not yet contracted this unpleasant indisposition, or who had been cured of it, jocosely accused those whom they heard coughing of "bursting the genitals" (*rompre les genitoires*),* and would say to them *par esbattements*: "So you have it? On my word! You must have been singing '*Votre c. . . a la toux, commère.*' "*** Allusion was thus made to maladies of all sorts, such as the *mal saint-main*, the leprosy, the itch, the cough, etc., such as the unfortunate ones led away to the pillory were in the habit of wishing for their untimely banterers. No compassion was felt for these sinners, as we have observed, and the small children were the most stubborn in persecuting them. The authorities believed they were conforming to a unanimous public sentiment in not showing the least indulgence to these poor women, and yet there was one provost of Paris who took them under his protection, and who gave them, perhaps, too much support. This was Ambroise de l'Ore, Baron of Jully, who was named provost in 1436, and who died in 1445 while discharging the duties of his office. The people of the capital could not forgive him for having favored Prostitution, by permitting the ancient regulations to fall into desuetude. So long as his administration lasted, the prostitutes were almost free; they dressed themselves as they pleased, and lodged everywhere in the city. Ambroise de l'Ore, on his deathbed, repented of having been so paternal toward these creatures, and endeavored to repair the wrong he had done to public morals. "The week before the Ascension," relates the Bourgeois de Paris in his *Journal*, "it was cried throughout Paris that the *ribaudes* might no longer wear rosaries of silver nor reversed collars nor *pennes de gris* on their robes nor *menuvair*, and that they should go to dwell in the *borderaulx*, ordained as these had been for them in times past." This tardy satisfaction could not make the public forget the scandals which had gone before, and when Ambroise de l'Ore died a few days afterward, the Bourgeois de Paris took it upon himself to deliver his funeral oration, and pictured him as "less loving the common good than any provost there had been before him for forty years." The Bourgeois adds that this provost had one of the most beautiful and most decent

*Translator's Note:—Cf. our "bust your belly-band."

**Translator's Note:—Cf. in the *Ragionamenti*, Nanna's cough, the story entitled "The Best Profession" "This fig-bush of mine certainly hasn't known how to keep the sun." (I *Ragionamenti*, Part I, Third Day, "The Life of Courtezans." (Putnam translation.)

women in the world, but, nevertheless, "he was so lustful that it was said of a truth that he had three or four concubines by common law and supported everywhere the light women, of whom there were all too many at Paris, by his laxity, and thereby acquired a very ill renown among all the people; for one could scarcely have the law on light women, so much did he support them and their *maquerelles*."

Ambroise de l'Ore, before being provost of Paris and slackening the rein on the *light* women, had been one of the bravest knights of the *ost* of Charles VII, but his prowess at arms had not rendered him any the more virtuous, although he was the contemporary of a number of good knights of exemplary life and decent manners. He had passed his youth at the court of Charles VI, where knighthood was looked upon as consisting of tournaments and masquerades; he did not belong to that race of chaste and continent knights who, like the maréchal de Boucicaut, thought that "lust is more than anything in the world contrary to a valiant man-at-arms." The *bon mesire* Jehan le Maingre, called Boucicaut, did not forsake his continence when he became governor of Genoa, where the occasions of pleasure were numberless. "The virtues which are contrary to lubricity are in him," remarked his secretary-biographer; "he does not think of debauching the Genoese, for he is like stone, notwithstanding the fact that the ladies there are well adorned and well attired, and that there are many beautiful ones among them." One day when he was riding with his gentlemen in the city of Genoa, a lady who had dyed her hair blonde came to the window to see him pass; he paid no attention; but one of his squires remarked her, and could not refrain from saying: "Oh! what a beauty!" The marshal appeared not to hear; but when the squire turned once more to glance at the lady, he said to him with a glacial look, "That is enough!" The biographer who has recorded these *feats* of Boucicaut adds this reflection: "Thus, in fact and in appearance, the marshal is clean of that vice of carnality and of all superfluity, which is a perfect sign of continence."

Boucicaut, it is true, had been reared at the court of Charles V, who, among all his other virtues, according to his historiographer, Christine de Pisan, "loved that of chastity which was by him observed in fact, in word and in thought." Charles V, severe as he was with himself on this point, was equally severe toward his servants, and desired that they should be chaste "as much in continence as in habits, words and deeds, and all things." When he learned that one of his officers had

dishonored a woman, even though the officer was his favorite, he drove that officer from his presence and dispensed forever with his services. And yet, he was not lacking in Christian charity toward sinners, and, "considering human fragility," he would never consent to a husband's "immuring his wife in perpetual penitence for a misdeed of her body." He merely permitted the husband to keep her locked in a room, if she had been too greatly dishonored, in order that she might not become a shame to her husband and to her relatives. He forbade indecent books to be introduced and read at the court of the Queen and the Princes. It was reported to him one day that a knight of the court had "instructed the Dauphin in love" (*instruit le dauphin à amour et vagueté*); he sent for this knight and forbade him ever to appear again before his wife and children. Christine de Pisan, who has reported these details in the *Livre des Faits et Donnes Moeurs du Feu Roi Charles*, informs us that he would not permit at table the *gouliars de bouche*, *aportant paroles vagues*, and that he regarded the playing of fiddlers as "introductions to lust" (*introductions à la luxure*); he frequently repeated the word of St. Paul in the *Epistle to the Corinthians*: "Evil communications corrupt good manners." The reign of Charles VI, on the other hand, and a part of that of Charles VII were disgraced by all the vices and all the crimes which Charles V had endeavored to banish from his realm; and Prostitution, which this wise King everywhere repressed by his example, no longer knew any barriers or limits.

In order to form an idea of the degree of perversity at which some of the nobles had arrived, and some of the great lords who abandoned themselves to all the aberrations of debauchery, we must read, in the Archives of Nantes, the criminal trial of Gilles de Retz, maréchal de France, condemned to the flames in 1440. Gilles de Retz was one of the most puissant lords of Brittany; he had valiantly served Charles VII during the war with the English; he had fought with Dunois* and Lahire, under the banner of Jeanne d'Arc; he was lettered and learned. But the reading of Suetonius had excited him to imitate the monstrous debaucheries of the Roman emperors; like Tiberius and Nero he had

*Translator's Note:—"Le beau et jeune Dunois" of the old song ("Partant pour la Syrie"). For a modern, scholarly and corrective view of Gilles de Retz or Gilles de Rais (Gilles de Raiz), see: *La Vie et la Mort de Gilles de Raiz (Dit a Tort "Barbebleue")*, par Emile Gabory, Perrin et cie., Paris, 1926. M. Gabory attacks, among other things, the false identification of Gilles with "Bluebeard." In his preface, he has an interesting comparison of Gilles de Raiz with Nero and other villains of history.

a passion for blood mingled with ordure; he had no other pastime than forcing his abominable caresses upon the poor children whom he caused to be kidnapped on all sides; when they were handsome and *jolies*, he attached them to his person or strangled them with his own hands. Superstition and magic aided him in his cruelties and defilements; he had a magnificent chapel, with choristers and canons whom he kept well and, at the same time, he had sorcerers and magicians in his pay, with whom he indulged in invocations to the Devil. This execrable fellow, who in more ways than one was like another wicked wretch whose acquaintance we shall later make (the Marquis de Sade), was finally brought to justice, arrested with his principal agents and judged by an extraordinary tribunal, named for this purpose by the Duke of Brittany, his cousin. The inquiry revealed horrors which confirmed the depositions of the witnesses. There were found, in the subterranean passages of the châteaux of Chantoce, Suze, Ingrande, etc., the calcinated bones and the ashes of children whom the maréchal de Retz had assassinated, after abusing them. He was not backward about confessing everything, and not being able to hope for grace from any human tribunal, he demanded pardon of the eternal Judge, before whom he knew he would have to appear.*

The depositions of the accomplices of Gilles de Retz familiarize us with the horrible scenes which the old château de Chantoce had witnessed. Henriët, the marshal's chamberlain, declared "that Gilles de Sille and Pontou have given a number of small children to the said Sire de Rais in his chamber, with which small children he had cohabitation and warmed himself with them, committing an act of nature upon their bellies, and taking with them his pleasure and delectation; that he never had cohabitation with one of the said children except once or twice, and that afterwards the sire would sometimes with his own hand cut their throats, and sometimes, Gilles de Sille, Henriët and Pontou would cut them in the chamber of the said sire, and that the blood would flow over the place, which was afterwards cleansed; and that these children, once dead, were burned in the said chamber of the said sire, after he had gone to bed, and their dust was thrown away; and that the said sire took greater pleasure in cutting their throats than in having cohabitation with them." Henriët, interrogated regarding these infamous mysteries, completed his first confession with new details; he related

**Translator's Note*:—See the superb and really touching description of the trial scene in Huysmans' *La-Bas*.

"having heard the said Sire de Rais say that it was very easy to see the heads of children cut off, after having had cohabitation with them on their bellies, having their legs between his own, and sometimes he would sit upon the bellies of the said children, while their heads were separated from their bodies, and other times he would cut their throats from the rear in order to cause them to languish, in which he took great pleasure, and as they languished, he would sometimes have cohabitation with them, up to the moment of death, and sometimes after they were dead, while they were still warm; and he had a broadsword with which to cut off their heads, and whenever these children were not handsome enough for this pleasure, he would cut off their heads himself with the said broadsword, and afterwards he would have cohabitation with them. He said that no man on the planet could know or do what he did. Sometimes, the sire would have the said infants dismembered by their arm-pits, and he would take pleasure in seeing the blood.

"*Item*, this sire, in order to prevent the said infants from crying aloud when he desired to have cohabitation with them, would first have a cord put about their necks and hang them up, at a distance of three feet in height, in a corner of his chamber, and before they were dead, he would have them let down, telling them that they were not to say a word but that they were to warm his member, by holding it in their hands; and afterwards, he would commit an act of nature upon their bellies, and this done, he would have their throats cut, and their heads separated from their bodies." These frightful confessions were confirmed by Étienne Cornillaut, called Pontou, the marshal's favorite and one of his accomplices. Pontou did not wait until he was questioned to confess the crimes of his master and his own crimes; he added a few new facts to those which Henriët had revealed. Thus, the Sire de Retz was in the habit of giving two or three crowns for each infant that was procured for him; sometimes, he himself would choose the children and have them brought secretly to one of his châteaux. "He took sometimes little girls, with whom he would have cohabitation upon the belly, as well as male infants, saying that he thereby found a greater pleasure and less annoyance. When two children were brought to him together, so that one might not give the alarm for the other, after having taken satisfaction with the one, he would keep the other until his appetite had returned." Gilles de Retz, following depositions so explicit as these, had nothing to do but admit their veracity. He confessed, then, having abused

infants, "for his own ardor and the delectation of lust, and of having had them slain by his people, either by cutting their throats with daggers and knives, by separating their heads from their bodies, or by breaking their heads with blows of a club or other object. And sometimes, he would remove their members, or cause them to be removed, and would split them open in order to have their entrails, and would have them attached to an iron cross, in order to strangle them or cause them to languish, and as they languished at the point of death, he would have cohabitation with them, and sometimes after they were dead, he would kiss them, and would take pleasure in looking upon the beautiful heads of the said infants, which afterward were burned." He was asked when and how he had come to conceive these unheard-of atrocities for the first time; he replied "that he had begun this mode of life at Chantoce, the year his grandfather, the Sire de la Suze, died, and that of himself and out of his own head, without the counsel of any other, he had conceived the idea of doing all this, solely for pleasure and the delectation of lust, without other intention."

In listening to these avowals, uttered with the calmest air, the judges trembled on their seats and crossed themselves at every instant. This monster was condemned, along with his accomplices, but he was not afraid, and paternally encouraged the latter to make a good death, in order that they might all see each other again "in the great joy of Paradise" (*en la grand joie du Paradis*). He underwent the supreme penalty on the 26th of October, 1440, in a prairie situated above the bridges of Nantes; and after he had been strangled upon the lighted pyre, his body was given to his family, and "damoiselles of great estate" (*damoiselles de grand estat*) came to seek this defiled body, to wrap it in a shroud, and to bear it solemnly to the church of Carmes, where it was interred, the spectators being left with a memory of Gilles de Retz' *repentance* and his Christian end.

CHAPTER LVII

THE appearance, or rather the development, of the venereal maladies in France, as throughout the whole of Europe, altered in a manner the aspect of legal Prostitution and tended to its definite overthrow. Observing that these terrible maladies were attacking all society at its very root, the most enlightened men and those who were the freest from prejudice could not but believe that public debauchery was the sole cause of such a plague, whereas, on the other hand, the simple-minded and the credulous looked upon this plague as a punishment from Heaven. Then the magistrates began to repent of having authorized and organized the practice of a sin which carried with it such fatal consequences, and the first remedy which they endeavored to oppose to the invasion of this new plague was the suspension of those rules of tolerance by virtue of which there was to be found in every city a permanent seat of morbid infection. But it soon came to be looked upon as futile to endeavor to halt the course of Prostitution, when it was recognized that the source of the evil was not to be found alone in the bad-houses. Certain sanitary police measures which had not before been employed were put into effect, and the dissolute women of the community were subjected to a medical examination. This resulted in a notable improvement of conditions; and from this period, the municipal administration seriously concerned itself with the public health in all those delicate cases which theretofore had been looked upon as cases merely involving public morality and public order.

We must here treat of the origin of syphilis, since circumstances had caused the name, *mal Français*, to be given to it at the moment of its appearance in Europe, and since this name, as a matter of fact, was associated with the events which accompanied its entrance into France; but we purpose first to pursue a line of reasoning which we have already entered into regarding the antiquity of these venereal maladies. Undoubtedly, these maladies and the majority of epidemics and contagions underwent a multitude of metamorphoses, especially in the matter of symptoms, by reason of the variety of local, natural and atmospheric conditions which accompanied their genesis; undoubtedly, this hideous scourge, which science, after three centuries

and a half of profound studies, still looks upon as an insatiable monster, did not possess, before the year 1493 or 1496, to a terrifying degree the frightful character and especially the infectious virus which was observed for the first time at that period, when exceptional cases came to be common ones. The venereal malady, the same malady, had always existed from the most remote antiquity, as we have demonstrated, and it would have occasioned no more alarm than did any other chronic malady, if a combination of unforeseen circumstances had not suddenly communicated to it a means of propagating itself to a terrifying degree. We have proved, from the evidence of Celsus, of Areteus and the most illustrious Greek and Roman physicians, that the true syphilis, which authorities insist upon making contemporary with the discovery of America, was at Rome the inevitable sequel of the leprosy and of those cutaneous maladies which had been brought from Asia and Africa along with the spoils of conquered peoples. It is not difficult to understand, in going back to sources, how the frightful debauchery of the Romans had nourished the germs of all the venereal affections, and how new and unknown maladies had thereby been created. We persist in believing, however, that the transmission of the virus was not then as prompt or as frequent as it has since become in modern times; and it is probable, moreover, that the ancients, who possessed more than five hundred sorts of washes for diseases of the eye, had also curative prescriptions for the infirmities of love. We shall have to observe, through the Middle Ages, the striking progress of the venereal evil, under different names, until it attained its final transformation with the name of *grosse vérole*.

This obscene malady has always existed in the chronic state with certain isolated individuals; it is reproduced by contagion, with a great variety of accidental characteristics, depending upon the temperament of the patients and deriving from a multitude of local circumstances, which it would be impossible to enumerate or to describe; but it always finds its germ in unclean sexual relations, and it does not develop of itself without a preëxisting and infectious cause. Prostitution was the most active cause of this libidinous leprosy, which was propagated with a greater or less degree of malignity according to the country, the season, the patient, etc. At first, it was but debauchees who were afflicted with this shameful evil, and the malady remained in a manner circumscribed and confined to these degraded beings who had no contact with decent folk. However, at

certain periods, and by reason of a concatenation of physiological facts, the malady became exasperated and exceeded its ordinary bounds, by becoming associated with other epidemic or contagious maladies; it multiplied, then, with the most frightful symptoms, and threatened to poison the entire population, which it decimated. After having made manifest and hidden ravages, it would suddenly halt its course. It was never medicine that hindered its mysterious progress, although medicine combatted it by means of energetic remedies; it was religion which, by ordaining public penances, thus eliminated the perils of contagion by making a warfare upon the sin which was its immediate cause. Absolute abstention from the joys of the flesh for a considerable period of time was the most efficacious remedy which the French clergy, or rather the episcopacy, so ingeniously far-sighted where the welfare of the people was concerned, had been able to conceive as an enemy to the progress of this pestilential scourge. During long crises of public health, legal Prostitution, it must be stated, disappeared completely. The bad-houses were closed; the common women were forced, under pain of arbitrary punishment, to abandon their dangerous trade, and the municipal police enacted proscriptions so severe on this point that, from the beginning of an epidemic in the sixteenth century, all the suspect women were driven out or imprisoned and kept under lock and key until the malady had disappeared.

Let us not forget to remark that the climate of Gaul was only too favorable to all the pestilential maladies and all the affections of the skin. Immense swamps and impenetrable forests diffused over all the land an unhealthy and putrid humidity, which the warmth of summer changed into deleterious miasmas. The soil, in place of being rendered more healthful by cultivation, gave forth the most morbid emanations. The mode of life of the inhabitants, moreover, was none too hygienic; they slept on the earth, on the skins of beasts, without any other shelter than their tents of hide or branches; they ate little bread and much meat, much fish, much salt-flesh, for they raised great herds of black pigs in the druidic woods. It is not astonishing, therefore, that elephantiasis and the other hideous degenerescences of leprosy had already become well acclimated among the Gauls in the second century of the modern era. The learned Areteus, who would appear to have written under Trajan his treatise, *De Curatione Elephantiasis*, says that the Celts or Gauls possessed a number of remedies against this terrible malady, and that they especially employed little balls of

nitre with which they rubbed their bodies in the bath. Marcellus Empiricus, who practiced medicine at Bordeaux at the time of the Emperor Gratian, reports that the physician Soranus had undertaken to cure, in the Province of Aquitaine alone, two hundred persons attacked with sordid eruptions, which spread over all their bodies. We have proved that the venereal evil was but a form of leprosy contracted in the course of sexual relations. We have shown how the abominable aberrations of the senses, might, in exceptional cases, increase a hundred fold the malignancy of the virus, by carrying it to those parts of the organism which were the least able to withstand it. We have, finally, in treating of the origin of elephantiasis, made use of those suppositions which were put forward by the physicians of the fifteenth century on the occasion of the *mal de Naples*, in which were seen the monstrous effects of crime against nature.

It was during the sixth century that the venereal evil made its appearance in France as an epidemic; it was then called *lues inquinaria* or *inguinaria*. According to the first term, this malady was a defilement, possibly a gonorrhea such as the books of Moses describe (*Leviticus*, Chapter XV); according to the second description of this malady, which Gregory of Tours frequently employs to indicate its nature, it was an inflammation of the groins, where it formed a malign ulcer which caused death after unheard-of sufferings. Dom Ruinart in his edition of the *History of Gregory of Tours*, notes that this inguinal ulcer slew the patient as a serpent might (*lues inguinaria sic dicebatur, quod, nascent in inguine vel in axilla, ulcere in modum serpentis interficeret*). The *Glossary* of Ducange records, in the edition of the Benedictines, the two names of this *pestilence*, which made its first appearance in 546, and which many times returned to the charge among those populations which were given over to the hideous distractions of unnatural debauchery. But the learned editors have neglected to facilitate the interpretation of these two names attributed to the same malady, by means of an illuminating comparison of passages in which there is question of this malady in the contemporary chroniclers. The infamous origin of this malady appears to us to be sufficiently indicated by the horror which it inspired, and which was not dependent solely upon the fear of death, for those tainted with it appeared to have been struck by the hand of God as a punishment for their impurities; the bloated mess and the purulence of the organs of generation, the buboes of the loins, the bloody flux of the intestines,

the gangrenous abscesses on the buttocks spoke clearly enough as to the nature of this obscene contagion.

It reappeared with new symptoms in 945, after the invasion of the Normans, who, it is likely, were not unfamiliar with it. Flodoard abstains, however, from all unseemly conjecture on this point: "About Paris and in divers places in its environs," he says in his *Chronicle*, "a number of men found themselves afflicted with a fire in divers parts of their bodies, which were insensibly consumed until death came to put an end to their punishment; of whom some retired into holy places to escape their torments; but the majority were cured at Paris in the church of the Holy Mother of God, Mary, in such a manner that all who were able to go there felt assured of being guaranteed against this pestilence, and the Duke Hugues every day gave them the wherewithal to live. There were some among them who, desiring to return to their homes, felt in them a new flaring-up of that fire which had been extinguished, and returning to this church, they were delivered." Sauval, who provides us with this naïve translation, adds that, "since all the remedies went for nothing, recourse was had to the Virgin in the church of Notre-Dame, which served as a hospital on this occasion." We find, as a matter of fact, in the great *Pastoral* of this church, under date of 1248, a capitulary charter relating to six glowing lamps which were to light, night and day, the place where the poor dying ones, afflicted with this villainous malady, were promiscuously lying; this malady is referred to as the "sacred fire" (*ubi infirmi et morbo, qui ignis sacer vocatur, in ecclesiâ laborantes, consueverunt reponi*). The majority of authors who have spoken of this horrible malady, says the learned compiler of the *Memorial Portatif de Chronologie* (Volume II, page 893), are in agreement in attributing to it the same symptoms and the same effects. "Its invasion was sudden; it burned up the entrails or all other parts of the body, which fell in shreds; under a livid skin, it consumed the flesh, separating the flesh from the bone. The most astonishing thing about this malady was that it produced no real heat, but penetrated with a glacial cold those whom it had attacked, while this mortal frigidity was succeeded by so great an ardor in the same parts that the patients experienced all the effects of a cancer." It is our opinion that the men of the North had left as they passed this obscene souvenir of their depraved manners; for the abominable disease which was their work generally afflicted only the masculine sex.

The *feu sacre* was only arrested in its progress by the sage counsels of the Church, which took upon itself the task of curing the sick whom it had absolved; but the vicious habits of the conquerors had become ingrained in those provinces which the Normans had invaded. The year 994 saw a rebirth of the *mal des ardents*, along with the criminal causes which had kindled it the first time, and this malady, transmitted by the most infectious form of debauchery, promptly passed from France into Germany and into Italy. The tenth century, was, moreover, all too propitious for all sorts of calamities which might strike the human species. It was generally believed that the year 1000 would mark the end of the world, and in this belief the wicked, who felt that they were destined to the flames of Hell, made what use they could of the time that was left them, by yielding with more fury than ever to their detestable habits. The continual rains, the excessive cold and frequent floods aided the epidemics which were depopulating the earth. The fields, no longer cultivated, became barren heaths, swamps and morasses, the emanations from which infected the air. Fish perished in the rivers, animals in the woods, and all these putrid cadavers exhaled poisonous vapors which engendered a multitude of maladies. The *mal des ardents* began once more its human harvest throughout France. The King of France, Hugh Capet, himself succumbed to it, a victim of the wholly paternal care with which he had ministered to the sick. These latter almost all died, since they had given the malady time to take deep root in their atrophied organisms. This frightful contagion, in the presence of which the art of the physician confessed its impotency since vice always aided the disease, had received the name of *mal sacre*, on account of its accursed origin. For, says the book *De l'Excellence de Sainte Geneviève*, "in the formation of names, a thing is frequently given a name which is the contrary of what is meant (*morbus igneus, quem physici sacrum ignem appellant eâ nominum institutione, quâ nomen unius contrarij alterius significationem sortitur*). It is certain that public opinion, without being any too well informed as to the nature of the malady, attributed its invasion to a chastisement from Heaven, and its cure to the intercession of the Virgin and the Saints. There were certain ecclesiastics who unchristened the *mal sacre*, to give it, as a brand of shame, the name of *mal des ardents*, which the people afterward changed into *mal de Saint Main* and into *feu de Saint Antoine* (fire of St. Anthony), for the reason that these two Saints had had the honor

of curing or of relieving many of its victims. Pope Urban II, informed of the miracles which the faithful reported as the result of the intercession of St. Anthony, founded under the auspices of this Saint, a religious order, the fathers of which were charged with the exclusive care of the victims of the *mal des ardents*. Let us not forget, in connection with this foundation, to recall the fact that the pig, which is subject to the leprosy, and whose flesh also transmits leprosy when one eats no other food, became at about this period the symbolic animal of St. Anthony. Finally, a simple imprecation preserved in the vocabulary of the people down to the time of Rabelais, who has recorded it, relieves us of the necessity of proving that the fire of St. Anthony had a most infamous origin. The people and Rabelais still remarked in the sixteenth century: "May the fire of St. Anthony burn out your guts! (*Que le feu Saint-Antoine vous arde le boyau culier!*)"*

There were a number of other memorable recrudescences of this malady, notably in 1043 and in 1089; the last appears to have been that of 1130, under the reign of Louis VI. "A strange malady ran through the city of Paris and other neighboring places," relates Dubreul, "which the vulgar named the sacred fire or the *mal des ardents*, on account of the interior violence of the malady, which burned out the entrails of the one who was struck with it, with an incessant ardor the cause of which the physicians could not conceive, and as a consequence were unable to remedy." St. Anthony did not possess the exclusive privileges where prayers, offerings and cures were concerned. St. Geneviève, the patron Saint of Paris, and Saint Marcel likewise interposed to abate the plague. From this period, the little city chapel of the former Saint was transformed into a church under the name of Saint-Geneviève-des-Ardents, which name remained for a long time after the malady had been restricted to a few isolated cases. The first victims of the syphilis in the fifteenth century went to this old church to seek curative miracles. Tradition recognized in these new ones who called upon St. Geneviève the direct heirs of those who formerly suffered from the *mal des ardents*; by the

*Translator's Note:—As a matter of fact, "St. Anthony's Fire" was what is known to the medical profession as Ergotism. It came from intoxication with the ergot of cereals and was accompanied by symptoms of erysipelas and gangrene.—See Rabelais, Prologue to Book Second: "May St. Anthony's fire burn you up"; also, Book First, Chapter XIII.: "May St. Anthony's fire burn out the rumpgut of the goldsmith that made them and the lady that wore them."

same law of inheritance, the other Saints, such as St. Anthony, St. Job, etc., who had formerly been invoked for the cure of the leprous and mangy maladies, now resumed their old attributes with regard to the venereal malady, properly so-called, which, however, was not a new one for them. But from the end of the twelfth century down to the appearance of the *mal de Naples*, all the shameful maladies, born of or aggravated by impure sexual relations, were absorbed by the hydra of leprosy, which reared its head on all sides, and which was propagated under the most varied forms. The leprosy of the twelfth century, whether or not it had a venereal origin, owed a heavy debt to Prostitution for the threatening progress which it made at this period, a progress which all the governments did their best to stop by means of similar police and public-health measures. We do not hesitate to advance the theory that the relaxation of these measures gave birth to the syphilis of the fifteenth century.

We are not to deduce from the silence of medical annals for five or six hundred years that the leprosy, last described by Paul of Aegina in the sixth century, had disappeared in Europe down to the eleventh century, when we behold it breaking out with renewed fury. A history of private life in the Middle Ages would be an irrefutable monument to the continued existence of elephantiasis (since the causes which produced this parent form of leprosy existed then in the highest degree); even if the ecclesiastical writings were not filled with statements which tend to confirm this fact; the collection of the Bollandists and the cartularies of the churches and the monasteries make frequent mention of lepers. Gregory of Tours says that they had at Paris a sort of asylum where the victim cleansed their bodies and dressed their sores. Pope St. Gregory, in his writings, pictures a leper who had been disfigured by the malady *quem densis vulneribus morbus elephanticus defoedaverat*. Elsewhere, he tells us that two monks contracted the same malady, from having slain a bear (*pour avoir tué un ours*), which afflicted them in such a manner that their members rotted and fell off. In the eighteenth century, Nicolas, Abbot of Corbie, caused a lazarethouse to be constructed, which is sufficient proof that the lepers were then very numerous. The law of Rotharis, King of the Lombards, under date of 630, formed a basis of all legislation on the subject. Everywhere, the leper was cut off from the bosom of society, which looked upon him as a dead man; and if poverty forced him to live by means of alms, he still did not approach anyone, but announce-

ed his presence with the sound of a wooden stick. Despite these legislative precautions, the lepers sometimes succeeded in hiding the sorry state of their health, and even contracted marriage with healthy persons; hence the capitulary of Pepin for the dissolution of these marriages in 737. Another capitulary of Charlemagne, in 789, forbids lepers, under the severest penalties, to frequent the company of healthy folk. It may readily be understood that sexual relations were the most dangerous auxiliary to contagion, which, however, did not spread too widely, thanks to the general horror which lepers inspired, thanks, above all, to the preventive intervention of the municipal police.

But as we have already observed, it was the ecclesiastical influence which had the greatest effect upon morals and their consequences; a sort of hygienic régime was frequently a part of penitence, and the confessional took the place of medical consultations. The priest concerned himself with the physical as with the moral health of his flock, and he was only able to keep the latter in the right path by threatening them with those hideous evils which the punishment of God sent as a means of reprobation for libertines and the infamous. The epidemics coincided always with the periods of social corruption, and a disorderly state of public manners inevitably brought with it a loss on the side of sanitary economy. The respectable classes were stupefied at being themselves afflicted with impure maladies, which must have been endemic among the immense throng of beggars, vagabonds, debauchees and lost women, wandering through the fields, or relegated to the Courts of Miracles. It was from debauchery and misery that the venereal malady drew its most characteristic symptoms and to them that it owed its most hideous metamorphoses. Never did a *mire* or a *physician* penetrate these inaccessible retreats to study there the nameless maladies which were prevalent and which were frequently complicated in monstrous ways, one disease mingling with another and one incessantly devouring the other. It is certain that the wretches who led this vagabond (*truande*) existence had no contact with the healthy and respectable population, except at certain critical periods, after which the wave of impurity would return to its bed and leave to time, to religion and to the human police the task of effacing its vestiges. It was thus that leprosy suddenly spread, like a torrent which had broken its banks, over the body social, which it would have poisoned, if the prudence and the energy of those in power had not erected a

barrier against the invasions of the malady. The Crusades had brought together, so to speak, all the dregs of society, and had con-founded, in a weird upheaval, the nobility with the people. The police regulations were unable to sustain the shock of this army of pilgrims, who went to die or to seek their fortunes in the Orient. The most audacious Prostitution ate its way like a gangrene among these undisciplined hordes. Upon their return, after their adventures in Palestine, all the poor Crusaders were more or less suspected of having the leprosy, or *mêleserie*; some of them green lepers, the others white; the majority of them brought back the bitter fruits of oriental debauchery; and the assurance then grew that the venereal malady was but one of the forms of leprosy.

It was necessary to submit the lepers to a rigorous policing for purposes of public health, these regulations being reënacted three centuries later against the *véroles*, with the object of preventing the contagion from spreading still further. As in the code of Rotharis, the leper was looked upon as a dead man from the moment he entered the lazaret, accompanied by exorcisms and funeral rites. The curate would three times cast earth from the cemetery upon his head, addressing to him these lugubrious injunctions: "See that you do not enter any house; when you speak to anyone, you shall go against the wind. When you demand alms, you shall sound with your stick. You shall not go far from your dwelling without your habit of a *bon malade*. You shall not look into or draw from a well or a fountain, unless it is one of your own," etc. He was further forbidden to walk with bare feet, to pass through narrow streets, to touch children, to spit in the air, to brush against walls, doors or trees in passing, to sleep along the roads, etc. When he came to die, he did not even find a burial place among Christians, and his companions in misery were compelled to inter him in the lepers' cemetery. Never might a leper, even though he had been cured, live in the interior of the city under the common régime. There were, however, many degrees of the malady, which was not absolutely incurable, and which did not always make its appearance by means of obvious signs; but since it afflicted by preference the poorest classes, the physicians cared no more about treating it than the victims did about being treated. The latter, whether they were lepers by birth or by accident, looked upon themselves as irrevocably damned to the disease, and so resigned themselves as a prey to the ravages of this frightful infirmity, which, from

lack of treatment, merely grew and became more exasperated, until it destroyed all the vital organs. Sometimes, the disease was stationary, and although its germ remained in the individual, its effects were paralyzed or halted, by a good constitution or from some other inappreciable cause. All commerce with professional lepers was forbidden healthy persons, by reason of the disgust and terror which the lepers excited, rather than by reason of the law, which segregated them under pain of death. But by way of compensation, the lepers enjoyed a free intercourse among themselves; they had their own wives, children and households; they were not strangers to any of the feelings which prompt mankind to reproduce the species, and it was thus that their race came to be perpetuated in the midst of a population which avoided their sight and their approach; it was thus that leprosy passed from generation to generation and laid hold of the child in the belly of the mother. The lepers, however, did not multiply as might have been expected, for the germ of death which they carried with them, decimated their ranks unceasingly, after changing them into perambulating corpses. The son of a leper was ordinarily more leprous than his father, and the disease being transmitted in this manner, took on a new virulence in place of being weakened. The most numerous family was consumed by it in the space of a century. That was why leprosy itself almost disappeared along with the lepers at the end of a number of centuries, although the majority of the victims were sexually very ardent, and very apt at procreating their kind.

The most common characteristic of the leprosy was an eruption of pimples all over the body, notably on the face; but these pimples, which were constantly coming back, were distinguishable by a variety of forms and colors: some were hard and dry; others soft and purulent; some crusted, some creviced; black, red, yellow, green; all hideous to the sight and to the smell. As to the uniform signs of the malady, the celebrated Guy de Chauliac distinguished six principal manifestations, which Laurent Joubert defines in these terms, in his *Grande Chirurgie*, in the chapter on leprosy: "Eating away of the eyes and the ears, depilation and enlargement or tuberosity of the brows, dilation of the nostrils without and constriction within, disfiguration of the lips, raucous and nasal voice, malodorous breath and person, fixed and horrible look." Guy de Chauliac, who lived in the fourteenth century, had had opportunity to observe a multitude of subjects, which was not the case with Laurent Joubert, who wrote upon leprosy at the end

of the sixteenth century, when it no longer existed except in name. The equivocal signs of leprosy were sixteen in number: "The first is induration and tuberosity of the flesh, especially of the joints and extremities; the second is the dark and shady hue; the third is the falling out of the hair; the fourth, consumption of the muscles and principally of the thumb; fifth, insensibility, stupor, and cramps in the extremities; sixth, itching and pimples, copperous ulcerations on the body; seventh, granular formations under the tongue, under the eyebrows and behind the ears; eighth, heat and a feeling of pricking over the body; ninth, crisping of the skin, like a feather when exposed to the air; tenth, a greasy appearance when subjected to water; eleventh, general absence of fever; twelfth, mad and deceitful character and desire to meddle in other people's affairs; thirteenth, nightmares and bad dreams; fourteenth, weak pulse; fifteenth, black, leaden and dark-colored blood, ashy, and grumous; sixteenth, livid urine, white, solid and ashy-colored." We shall see later that these symptoms are almost identical with those of the *grosse vérole*, which was but a renaissance of the leprosy, under the influence of the Italian wars.

The leprosy had an infinite number of other special characteristics, determined by local and climatic circumstances. For example, the *mal des ardents*, which had degenerated into a virulent gonorrhea, might come from cohabitation with a leprous person. In this malady, which was called *l'ardeur*, *l'arsure*, *l'incendie*, *l'échauffaison*, the genital parts were attacked with phlogosis, erysipelas, ulcerations, blisters, etc., and the patient experienced a lively pain in urinating. A learned physician of the thirteenth century, Theodoric, says in Book VI of his *Surgery* that whoever approaches a woman who had known a leper contracts a bad disease (*mauvais mal*). In a treatise on Surgery attributed to Roger Bacon, who wrote at the same period, we find a description of the horrible maladies which might follow unclean relations of this sort. A number of contemporary physicians have studied this species of venereal infection, which reigned in London in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, as we shall see when we come to speak of England. One of these physicians, John of Gaddesden, devotes a chapter of his *Practica Medicinæ Seu Rosa Anglicana* to the accidents which result from the unsanitary company of lepers, male and female. "He who has slept with a woman," he says, "with whom a leper has had intercourse feels prickings over his flesh and sometimes hot flashes over all his body." The English physicians of that time

give us a number of details regarding the venereal leprosy which the French and Italian physicians do not, for the reason that the laws against lepers were a good deal more rigorous in England than anywhere else; also the cases of leprous contagion were more common there and of graver import than in any other country.

Thanks to the energetic and widespread measures which were taken throughout Europe, with the object of arresting leprosy and related maladies, the major portion of the population, except possibly in England, might be assured of remaining safe and sound. In the time of Matthew Paris, who wrote in the middle of the thirteenth century, there were more than 19,000 lazariahouses in Europe. Two centuries later, the lazariahouses of France were abandoned and in ruin from lack of patients. They were taken possession of by parasites, who suppressed the titles of foundation and the rental contracts, so that it was almost in vain for Francis I, by his ordinance of 1543, to institute a search for these lost or stolen titles and charters.

It is, then, certain in the interval of two or three centuries, the great leprosy or elephantiasis had almost completely disappeared, along with the unfortunate ones who were afflicted with it, and who had not succeeded in propagating their kind throughout three or four generations. As to the "little leprosy" and its derivatives, they were disguised under less disturbing forms and became progressively weaker in their external symptoms, although the germ was always active in blood which had received it from birth or by contagious transmission. Society, which had cast the lepers from its bosom, found itself invaded by them anew, or at least by their children, and leprosy, in losing some of its hideous phenomena, began again to menace public health. It was by means of Prostitution that this infamous malady made its return among the abject classes and crept into the higher classes in the form of hidden metamorphoses. We do not doubt that the *mal de Naples*, which was never anything else than a resurrection of leprosy, combined with other maladies, had silently pursued its way in the houses of debauchery before breaking out in the light of open day under the name of the *grosse vérole*, spreading over all Europe at once.

We shall speak later of the *arsure*, which had infected the bad houses of London, to such a degree that it was necessary, in 1430, to enact laws restraining these houses, under penalty of a fine, from receiving any woman tainted with the disease, and providing for the

proper treatment of those who had been attacked by the detestable malady (*infirmetas nefanda*, say the sanitary laws, cited by William Beckett in Volume XXX of the *Transactions Philosophiques*). Following are the statements of a number of physicians and surgeons, statements which do not permit us to believe that the venereal maladies were merely contemporary with the discovery of America. Guillaume of Saliceto, a physician of Piacenza, in the thirteenth century, does not forget in his Surgery, in the chapter entitled *De Apostemate in Inguinibus*, the bubo, *dragonneau* or abscess of the loins, which sometimes forms, he tells us, "when the man contracts a corruption in his member as the result of having had an affair with an improper woman." (*Traité des Malad. Vénér.*, by Astruc, translated by Louis, Volume I, page 134 and following.) The same practitioner, in another chapter, treats of the white and red pustules, of the miliary pimple and of the crevices which occur on the member or about the prepuce, and which are occasioned by the "commerce which one has had with a dirty or a public woman." Lanfranc, famous physician and surgeon of Milan, who came to take up his residence in Paris about 1395, develops the same doctrine with reference to the maladies of the shameful parts, in his book entitled *Practica Seu Ars Completa Chirurgiae*: "The ulcers of the member," he says, "are occasioned by the acrid humors which ulcerate the place where they are found, or by carnal conjunction with a dirty woman who has had an affair recently with a man attacked by a similar malady." Bernard Gordon, a not less celebrated member of the Faculty of Montpellier, who must have survived Lanfranc, holds the same opinions with regard to maladies of the virile member (*De Passionibus Virgae*), in his *Lilium Medicine*: "These maladies are very numerous," he says, "such as abscesses, ulcers, chancres, swelling, pain and itching. Their causes are external or internal: among the external causes are a fall, a blow and carnal conjunction with a woman whose matrix is unclean, full of virulence, or of flatulence, or of similar corrupt matters. But if the cause is internal, these maladies are then produced by certain corrupting and evil humors which descend from the member to the lower parts. John of Gaddesden, an English physician of the University of Oxford, Guy de Chauliac of the University of Montpellier, Valesius of Tarento of the same University, and a number of other doctors who made their observations in different countries in the fourteenth century, all of them recognized the fact that unclean relations engendered virulent

maladies, which were contagious and which thus came to be venereal.

In these various maladies, leprosy inevitably played the principal rôle, before and after the appearance of the *mal de Naples*. Those practitioners who have studied the leprosy, and who have published their researches on this subject, are agreed in the opinion that the leprosy was communicated by sexual relations rather than in any other way. These relations between healthy persons and lepers were very rare; but imprudence or dissolute habits sometimes led to them, with great harm to the healthy person, who in turn became a leper. Bernard Gordon, whom we have quoted above, tells us that a certain countess who had the leprosy came to Montpellier, and that he treated her to the end of her malady. A bachelor in medicine whom he sent to her to treat her was unfortunate enough to share her bed. She became pregnant and he a leper. (*Lilium Medicinæ*, Part I, Chapter XXII.) A number of analogous facts might be found in the writings of Forestus of Paulmier, of Paré, of Fernel, etc., who wrote upon the elephantiasis or the leprosy, expressing the unanimous sentiment of the schools of medicine and surgery. Jean Manardi of Ferrera also sums up this question at the beginning of the sixteenth century, without perceiving that he is confusing the leprosy and the venereal maladies: "Those," he says, in his *Epistolæ Medicinales*, published in 1525, "those who have commerce with a woman who has had an affair a little while before with a leper, so that the semen still remains in her matrix, contract the leprosy, and sometimes other maladies, of greater or less magnitude, according to their own disposition as well as that of the leper who has infected the woman." In all these quotations, we shall reproduce the version which the translator and annotator of Astruc employed in order not to alter the medical meaning of the learned author of the treatise, *De Morbis Venereis*. In examining this passage of Jean Manardi, it is impossible not to recognize the venereal maladies in those "other maladies of greater or less magnitude" engendered by relations more or less imprudent with a person more or less leprous. For relations of this sort, which would have involved the penalty of death for the leper in certain case, would undoubtedly have been looked upon as out of the question by the legislators, who made no provision for them in the criminal code.

The law of custom regulated everything which concerned the institution of lazarehouses, in which the leper was put *en charte privée*, so to speak. According to the Customary of Boulnois, when it was dis-

covered after the death of a man that he was a leper, and that he had nevertheless lived in the company of healthy folk, these latter were to be looked upon as his accomplices; and all the beasts of cloven hoof belonging to the inhabitants of the place where this leper had died were confiscated to the profit of the feudal lord. Each parish found itself in this manner responsible for its lepers; it was bound to provide for them, after having clad them in a sort of livery and confined them in *bordes*, furnished with a bed, a table and a few other utensils of wood and earth. (*Traité de la Police* by Delamare, Volume I, page 636 and following.) The lepers, who looked upon their disease as a living tomb, constantly endeavored to make their way back into the bosom of society, but they were constantly repelled with horror. Each time that a laxness on the part of the police permitted these poor wretches to dissimulate their pitiful condition and to participate in the common life, there was to be seen in the cities a revival of leprosy, which compelled the magistrates to put the old ordinances back into force. In 1371, the provost of Paris caused to be published letters-patent which had been addressed to him by Charles V, enjoining all the lepers to leave the capital within a period of fifteen days, "under very heavy corporal and pecuniary penalties." In 1388, he forbade lepers to enter Paris any more without an express permission bearing his signature. In 1394 and 1402, the same prohibitions were addressed to the lepers, "under pain of being taken to the executioner and his varlets and detained as prisoners during the month, on bread and water, and following to be banished from the realm." These prohibitions were always evaded at this period, and the healthy population forgot its terror regarding lepers, and the latter continued to live among them as though not affected by a contagious disease, for the leprosy diminished day by day, or at least its external signs became less manifest. The Parliament of Paris rendered a decree under date of the 11th of July, 1453, against a leper who had married a healthy woman. This woman, whom the leprosy had not yet attacked, as it appeared, was separated from her husband, and she was accordingly forbidden to *converse* with him, under pain of being placed in the pillory and afterwards banished. She was still permitted to dwell in the interior of the city, but she was ordered to cease selling fruits there, for the fear she might communicate to someone the contagion of the leprosy.

This decree is very significant; it proves that the rules concerning

leprosy were poorly observed in the fifteenth century, and that the lepers were permitted to reside outside the lazarehouses. The consequences of this relaxation must have been a return of the leprosy and of the maladies which resulted from it. As a matter of fact, a few years before the venereal malady had been observed in Italy and in France, the lepers had begun to multiply anew and to spread the venom of elephantiasis, and public health had suffered a profound taint through Prostitution, which was the hideous resort of lepers, male and female. By ordinance of the provost of Paris, dated the 15th of April, 1488, it was enjoined "on all persons attacked with the abominable malady of the leprosy, very perilous and contagious, to leave Paris before the feast of Easter day and to retire at once to their lazarehouses following the publication of the said ordinance, under pain of imprisonment for one month, on bread and water; under pain also of losing their horses, saddlecloths, and their *cliquettes*, and an arbitrary corporal punishment; they are permitted nevertheless to send on errands for them their servants and servant maids who are in health." These lepers, who had horses and saddlebags, servants and servant maids in good health, must have tended to spread the leprosy frightfully among the healthy ones of the population with whom they associated; and this form of leprosy, transmitted from one to another through venereal pleasures, corrupted physically those whom vice had corrupted with a moral stain. This was not yet the leprosy properly so-called. This was the leprosy of incontinence and the bad houses; it was a horrible malady which Prostitution had carried in its flanks, and which it unceasingly warmed in its bosom; this was the *grosse vérole*, which the French, from the place of its birth, had named the *mal de Naples*, and which the Italians, on the contrary, termed the *mal Français*.

CHAPTER LVIII

IT WOULD appear to us to have been definitely established, by the simple comparison of certain dates, that the venereal malady had not awaited the discovery of America to make its appearance in Europe and to make there terrible progress. This malady, as we have sought to prove by certain facts and deductions, had existed from remote antiquity, but it had been successively combined with other maladies, and especially with the leprosy, which had given it an entirely new appearance. It was Prostitution that in all times and in all countries, served as an energetic auxiliary to this plague, which the governmental police endeavored to surround, so to speak, with a cordon of sanitation. When this sanitary cordon was suddenly broken down and abandoned, the malady resumed its course and found a new freedom in the bosom of legal Prostitution. That is how the venereal leprosy came to break out at the same time, with a degree of violence, in France, in Italy, in Spain, in Germany, and in England, at the very moment when Christopher Columbus was returning from his first voyage. It is not difficult to establish the fact that the *grosse vérole*, or at least an analogous malady, had been observed in Europe from the year 1483; that this malady, or some other of the same nature and the same origin, formerly existed in the Antilles; and did not there produce the same symptoms as in the temperate latitudes; that the expedition of Charles VIII in Italy may have aided in spreading this frightful malady, but that Italy and France, each of whom assigned to the other a priority in this matter, had nothing to quarrel about, having merely reciprocally exchanged what they each had had for a long period; finally that, since its known appearance, the malady had frequently altered in symptoms, characteristics and names.

Among these names, which were many, and each of which had a local origin, we must distinguish the popular from the scientific. These latter were naturally Latin, in all the books and in the *recipes* (prescriptions) of medicine, but they disappeared one after another, yielding place to the one which Fracastor had invented for the needs of his poetic fable, in which the shepherd Syphile is the first to be tainted with this villainous malady, for the reason that he has offended the gods. The majority of the Italian or German physicians who wrote

at the end of the fifteenth century on the subject of the new malady (*morbus novus*), to which the Italian wars had given prominence, Joseph Grundbeck, Coradino Gilini, Nicolo Leonicens, Antonio Benivenio, Wendelin Hock de Brackenaw, Iacopo Cataneo, etc., made use of the usual term of *morbus gallicus* (*mal Francais*). And yet, as though little satisfied with the admission into medical language of what was at once an error and a calumny, a number of them coined names more worthy of science and not quite so far from the historic truth. Joseph Grundbeck, the oldest of all, added to the nickname of *mala de Frantzios* the periphrasis of *gorre pestilentielle* (*pestilentialis scorra*) and the description of *mentulagra* (malady of the virile member); Torrella, who, as an Italian, prided himself on being able to Latinize better than a German, adopted *pudendagra* (malady of the shameful parts); Wendelin Hock preferred *mentagra*, for the reason that he believed he recognized in this supposed French malady the mentagra or leprosy of the chin, described by Pliny (*Hist. Nat.*, Book XXVI, Chapter 1); Jean Antoine Roverel and Jean Almenar made use of the word *patursa*, without being aware of the true significance of this word although we may suppose that it was the generic name of the malady in America.

Each nation defended itself against the charge of having engendered this malady by attributing to it the name of the neighboring nation to which public opinion was most hostile; thus, the Italians, the Germans and the English, who accused France of having been the cradle of the *grosse vérole*, called it *mal Francais*, *mal Francese*, *Frantzosen*, or *Frantziosichen pocken*, *French pox*; the French took refuge a little later by calling it the *mal Napolitain*; the Flemish and the Dutch, the Africans and the Moors, the Portuguese and the inhabitants of Navarre cursed it as the *mal Espagnol* or *Castillan*; but this odious gift of which each people declined to consider itself the donor, was called by the Orientals the "malady of Christians" (*mal des chrétiens*); the Asiatics called it the *mal des Portugais*; the Persians called it the *mal de Turcs*; the Polish called it the *mal des Allemands*, and the Muscovites the *mal des Polonais* (see the *Treatise* of Astruc, *De Morbis Venereis*, Book I, Chapter I). The various symptoms of the malady also gave rise to different names, which had to do especially with the pustulous or cancerous condition of the skin of the victim; thus, the Spaniards called this disease *las bubas* or *buvas* or *boas*; the Genoese called it *lo malo de la tavele*; the Tuscans called it *il malo*

delle bolle; the Lombards called it *lo malo de le brosure* on account of the ulcerous and multicolored pustules which formed on all parts of the body in individuals tainted with this species of plague; the French called it the *grosse vérole* to distinguish it from the *petite vérole*, which had been classified from time immemorial among the epidemic maladies, and which, less redoubtable than its younger sister, still resembled the latter in the *variety* of the pustules and ulcerations which formed on the face; from the latter source came the generic name of *vérole* or *variole*, formed from the Latin *varius* and from the old French *vair*, which signified white and gray fur, and which was also applied to one of those heraldic metals, composed of equal-sized pieces symmetrically arranged in the form of bells. It was supposed that this arrangement of these pieces of *vair* possessed some analogy in appearance with the motley and creviced skin of an unfortunate *variole*. Finally, all the saints who were looked upon as being able to cure the leprosy were called into requisition; they were also invoked against the venereal maladies, and no scruple was felt in applying their respective names to these disrespeckable diseases, which were in a manner placed under their auspices. There was, then, between the leprosy and the *grosse vérole*, an avowed fraternity, which manifested itself in the names of saints applied without distinction to the two maladies, which were called the *mal de Saint Mein*, *mal de Saint Job*, *mal de Saint Sement*, *mal de Saint Roch*, *mal de Saint Evagre*, and even *mal de Sainte-Reine*, etc. It was sufficient for a saint to be reputed as having some influence over the cure of sores and malign ulcers for the *véroles* to address their prayers to him, and to look upon themselves as his privileged patients.

The physicians and historians who were the first to speak of the venereal epidemic in the latter part of the fifteenth century are practically in agreement upon this point, that the malady did not break out strikingly until after the expedition to Naples; but they almost all assign this expedition to the year 1494, whereas it did not take place until 1495. This contradiction in dates, however, does not constitute an historic error; for before the time of Charles IX, the year began at Easter, according to the French calendar. Writers who have made a comparison of the date of Charles VIII's invasion of Italy and that of the appearance of the *grosse vérole* in Europe have not hesitated to assign these two heterogeneous facts to the same year, 1494. According to them, the venereal malady had been observed from the

beginning of that year; but the King of France did not make his entry into Naples, where he found this horrible malady gloriously installed before him, until the 22d of February, 1495, which fell in 1494, since Easter day did not mark the beginning of the new year until the 19th of April. It is necessary, then, in order to justify the date of 1494, recorded by physicians and historians who specify the moment when the plague broke out,—it is necessary to assume that this *mal Français* was born at Naples between the 22d of February and the 19th of April, 1495. It would be difficult to raise the objection that the authorities who assigned the appearance of the malady to 1494 have made an error of one year; such an error is not probable in the matter of a fact that was so recent and so remarkable. Let us add, also, that the first to establish this date of 1494, were the Italians, and that the year in Italy began on the first of January and not at Easter, as in France. The result of these contradictions has been that the Italians have accused the adventurous expedition of the French of being the cause of a plague which it may have developed and aggravated, but which it did not bring with it. “The physicians of our time,” wrote, in 1497, Nicolo Leonicensi, in his Treatise, *De Morbo Gallico*, “have not yet given a true name to this malady, but they call it commonly the *French plague*, either because they assume that this contagion was brought into Italy by the French, or that Italy had been attacked at the same time by the French army and by this malady.” Torrella, in his treatise *De Dolo in Pudendagra*, is still more explicit: “This malady,” he says, “was discovered when the French army entered Italy, and especially after the French had taken possession of the realm of Naples, and after they had sojourned there a while. It is for this reason that the Italians have given it the name of the *French plague*, imagining it to be native with the French.” Cataneo, in his book, *De Morbo Gallico*, which appeared in 1505, limits himself to recalling the same fact: “The year 1494 of the Nativity of Our Lord, in the time when Charles VIII, King of France, was taking possession of the realm of Naples, and under the pontificate of Alexander VI, one saw springing up in Italy a frightful malady which had never before appeared in the course of the preceding centuries, and which was unknown throughout the entire world.” Jean de Vigo also makes the sudden irruption of this malady in Italy coincident with the passage of Charles VIII, a malady which he says no one had ever seen, or at least ever observed before.

The national antipathy existing between the Italians and their conquerors did not fail to confirm and spread this erroneous opinion, which remained embedded in the beliefs of the people, and which engendered in the latter unjust resentments. The French were less concerned with complaining of the vanquished and with spreading the truth, which would have justified themselves, by showing that they themselves were the victims of the *mal de Naples*; for the first French authors who have spoken of this malady, say nothing of its origin, and say nothing of the delights of the city of Naples, which had been conquered by Charles VIII.

There were, however, in Italy and in Germany, a number of artists and a number of more impartial historians, who did not hesitate to proclaim the innocence of the French in this affair, thus approaching a truth which science and history should not envelop in a cloud. Some questioned the date of 1494, attributed to the birth of the venereal plague (*lues venerea*); others assigned a more ancient date to its origin, or at least to its first ravages; others, less well instructed or feigning, perhaps, a calculated ignorance on this subject, assigned to the year 1496 the first invasion of the malady, which they would have to have come from Spain, and, consequently, from America. "In the year of our salvation 1496," wrote Antonio Benivenio in 1507, "a new malady crept not merely into Italy, but also throughout almost the whole of Europe. This malady, which came from Spain, was soon widely spread, first in Italy, then in France and in the other countries of Europe, attacking an infinite number of persons." And so, we see that poor Charles VIII is quite innocent of an unjust accusation which brought down upon his head the curses of a plague-ridden Europe. The historians come forward here to lend their support. Antonius Coccius Sabellicus, who knew what the *grosse vérole* was, since he himself had contracted it, states convincingly, in his historical collection published in Venice in 1502, "At the same time (1496), a new sort of malady began to spread throughout all Italy, about the time of the first descent which the French had made the preceeding year (1495), and it is probably for this reason that it is called the French plague, for, as I see it, one cannot be sure as to whence it was this cruel malady first came, a malady which no century had experienced up to then." If the date of 1496 could have been established and proved, the appearance of the malady would, quite naturally, have been connected with the discovery of America. In any case, the date

of 1496 has an evident connection with the rapid and formidable spread of the venereal epidemic.

But for scholars, who did not blindly follow popular tradition, there was no doubt that the French plague and the plague of Naples had preceded the triumphant expedition of Charles VIII. "The French," judiciously remarks Francesco Guicciardini, in the *History* of his times, "having been attacked by this malady during their sojourn at Naples, and then returning home, spread it throughout Italy; now this malady, absolutely new or unknown up to our day on our continent, excepting perhaps in the most remote regions, has spread so horribly during the last few years that it would seem to have been handed down to posterity as one of the most deadly of calamities." Guicciardini was in the right, in attributing solely to the army of the King of France the propagation of this plague throughout Italy. It is clear that this hideous plague had taken root at Naples before the arrival of the French. Ulrich von Hutten, a learned German writer, who had himself had a sorrowful experience with venereal contagion, assigned its beginning to the year 1493, a date which he could not have justified except by hearsay, since it was at Mayence in 1519 that he published his book entitled *De Morbi Gallaci Curatione*: "In the year 1493, or thereabouts, of the birth of Jesus Christ, a very pernicious evil commenced to be experienced, not only in France, but, first of all, at Naples. The name of this malady was derived from the fact that it first made its appearance in the army of the French who were making war in that country under the command of their King Charles." Then he adds this interesting detail, which explains for us the lack of agreement as to the precise date of the invasion of the malady: "The people have not spoken of it for two entire years, counting the time from which it commenced." Ulrich von Hutten shared the opinion of the German practitioners who looked upon the malady as precedent to the conquest of Naples by the French; thus Wendelin Hock von Brackenaw, who had completed his medical studies at the University of Bologna, repeats what he had heard in Italy at the time of the first appearance of the *mal de Naples*. "From the year 1494, down to the present year, 1502," he says, "a certain contagious malady, which is called the French plague, has made sufficient ravages." But elsewhere, in the same work, he states what was common knowledge with all his German confrères: "This plague, which began, properly speaking, in the year 1483 of Our Lord, was

announced," he says, "by the conjunction of a number of planets in the month of October of that year, this heralding a corruption of the blood and of the bile and the confusion of all the humors, as well as an abundance of the melancholy humor in all men, as in women." The most clever German physicians, Laurent Phrysius, Jean Benoist, etc., ranged themselves on his side, preferring to see the cause of the malady in planetary revolutions and in the atmospheric disorders of the year 1483.

This was not the only cause, nor the most unlikely one, which historians put forward; they in general merely echoed the vulgar who always, especially in Italy, have a story ready to provide a miraculous origin for all that is not readily understood. The French plague, more than any other thing, worked upon the imagination of the Neapolitans and lent itself to the most bizarre imaginings, among which, however, it would not be impossible to discover a basis of fact, enveloped in ridiculous fables. Gabriel Fallopius, who wrote a long time after the events which he reports (1560), sustains the thesis that, in the course of the first war of Naples, a Spanish garrison which was resisting the passage of the French troops one night abandoned their retrenchments, after having poisoned the wells and having advised the Italian bakers to mingle plaster and chalk in the flour from which they made bread for the French army. This plaster and poisoned water might have produced the venereal infection, according to the narrative of Gabriel Fallopius. Andrea Coesalpini of Arezzo, who was the physician of Pope Clement VIII, assumes that the poisoning of the French was accomplished by other means, and he assures us that eye-witnesses had reported the fact to him: "After the taking of Naples, the French besieged the little city of Somma, which had a garrison of Spaniards. These latter left the place during the night, leaving to the disposition of the besiegers a number of tons of excellent wine of Vesuvius, with which had been mingled blood provided by the lepers of the hospital of Saint-Lazare. The French entered this city without striking a blow, and became drunken with the poisoned wine; they at once fell sick, and the symptoms of their malady resembled those of the leprosy." We may already glimpse the truth under the veils which here cover it in a manner so transparent. There later arose other traditions which exaggerated and improved upon one another, tending always to spread the most unreasonable opinions. Fioravanti, in his *Capricci Medicinali*, which he published in 1564,

relates a singular story which he said he had heard from a certain Pasquale Gibilotto of Naples, who was still alive at the time he wrote, and able to vouch for the facts. During this expedition to Naples, which everywhere appears as the accomplice of the malady to which it gave birth, the Neapolitan *vivandiers* who provisioned the two armies ran short of beef and so conceived the infernal idea of employing the flesh of the dead in place of beef or mutton; those who ate this human flesh, poisoned by death and corruption, were soon attacked by a malady which was none other than the syphilis. Fioravanti does not tell us what was the scene of these frightful anthropophagic orgies; but inasmuch as he locates his tale among the Spaniards and the French, we must believe that this isolated occurrence took place during the siege of the little city of Callibra, occupied by a Spanish garrison. It is a known fact that all corrupt flesh is capable of producing the effects of poisoning, but there is no possibility of believing with Fioravanti that animals that feed on the flesh of animals of the same species are thereby likely to contract a malady similar to the plague of Naples. There was a belief in the Middle Ages that the use of human flesh provoked acute, epidemic and pestilential maladies. The illustrious philosopher, Francis Bacon, wholly the physician as he was, did not hesitate to repeat, in his *Natural History*, Fioravanti's horrible tale: "The French," he says, "from whom the plague of Naples has received its name, report that there were at the siege of Naples, certain knavish merchants who, in place of tunny-fish, sold the flesh of men who had been recently slain in Mauritania, and to such a horrible aliment was the origin of the malady attributed. The thing would appear to be likely enough," adds the author of so many illuminating treaties on the sciences, "for the cannibals of the occidental parts who live on human flesh, are strongly subject to the *vérole*."

To find in anthropophagy the origin of the plague of Naples did not provide horrors enough in the effort to ascertain the causes of this hideous disease, which was commonly looked upon as a monstrous fruit of mortal sin. Two learned physicians of the sixteenth century, who had not, however, observed more than the secondary effects of this terrible contagion, proceeded to cast, so to speak, the last stone, by endeavoring to demonstrate, with more reason than success, that the origin of the venereal plague must be contributed to sodomy and to bestiality: "A holy layman," says Jean-Baptiste van Helmont in his *Tumulus Pestis*, "in seeking to divine why the *vérole* had appeared

the century past and not before, was ravished in spirit and had a vision of mare eaten with the farcin, from which he suspected that, at the siege of Naples, where this malady appeared for the first time, some man had had abominable relations with a beast of this sort, which had been attacked by the same plague, and that afterward, as a result of divine justice, he had unhappily infected the human species."

Later, in 1706, an English physician, John Linder, did not hesitate, in seeking for the secret causes of the American syphilis, to advance the opinion that "this malady came from sodomy practiced between men and large apes, which are the satyrs of the ancients." It is important to recognize the fact that, in all these tales and observations of physicians who were the first to study the plague of Naples, whether in Italy, France, or Germany, no mention is made of the malady which Christopher Columbus had brought back from the Antilles, and which, in any case, had nothing to do with an analogous malady born and acclimated in Europe before the discovery of America had borne its bitter fruits. Christopher Columbus, coming back from the Spanish Isles, where he had dwelt barely a month, disembarked at the port of Palos in Portugal, on the 13th of January, 1493, with ninety sailors or soldiers and nine Indians whom he had brought back with him. The health of his crew may have been in a bad state, but historians do not speak of it, and we only know that he repaired to Barcelona with a few of his ships' companions in order to give an account of his voyage to Ferdinand the Catholic and Isabella of Aragon: "The city of Barcelona," says Roderigo Diaz, in his treatise, *Contra las Bubas*, "was soon infected with the *vérole*, which there made astonishing progress." On the 25th of September of the same year, Christopher Columbus departed with fifteen vessels laden with 1500 soldiers and a great number of sailors and artisans. Fourteen of these vessels came back to Spain the following year, during which Bartholomew Columbus, brother of Christopher, departed with three vessels, which came back to Spain towards the end of the year 1494, bringing Pedro Margarito, a Catalonian gentleman, gravely afflicted with the syphilis. It is probable that he was not the only one who was ill with the same malady; but the log of the ship mentions no other. The year 1495 saw an increase in the maritime relations between the Antilles and Spain; when Christopher Columbus, accused of imaginary crimes, returned from the old world in chains, the ship on which he was a prisoner brought 200 soldiers suffering from the American

vérole. These 200 plague victims disembarked at Cadiz on the 10th of June, 1496. Nine months after, the Parliament of Paris had already published an ordinance relating to victims of the *grosse vérole*.

One might, without an excess of paradox, sustain the thesis that it was Europe which gave America a malady to which the Antilles were better adopted than was Naples; one might put forward reasons enough to prove that the Spanish adventurers who had taken service in the army of the King of Naples had returned to their country with the venereal contagion, and without being cured, had their embarked for the Antilles. It is well known what a terrible influence a change of air and habits has always had on this inexplicable malady, which heat tends to soothe and which cold revives with an excess of fury. Finally, it is probable, if not proved, that the venereal evil as it broke out in Europe about 1494, was but an infamous by-product of leprosy and debauchery. Physicians were all very slow in recognizing that this malady was not perhaps so new as they had at first believed; and they judged that the leprosy, and especially elephantiasis, possessed more than one point of similarity with this virulent affection, accompanied by unaccustomed symptoms, the principle of which, however, did not vary. The popular voice spoke loud enough for medicine to hear it. One is astonished that the boldest pioneers of the science should have limited themselves to repeating the rumors which were current regarding the origin of syphilis, without erecting a system which it would have been easy to support with proofs and with data. But at the beginning of this epidemic, which was looked upon as a plague sent from Heaven, and one odious to nature (these are the terms of which Joseph Grundbeck makes use in the oldest treatise which we possess on this subject), the physicians and surgeons stood aloof and declined to treat the patients who came for aid. "The learned," says Torrella, "avoided treating this malady, being persuaded that they themselves understood nothing of it. This is why the vendors of drugs, the herb-vendors, the vagabonds and charlatans still pass themselves off today as the only ones who can effect a true and perfect cure."* Ulrich von Hutten expresses himself in yet more lively fashion, by asserting that the malady had been left free to go its own mysterious way before medicine and surgery had acquired the courage to deal with it: "The physicians," he says, "frightened by this malady, not only are careful not to approach those who are

**Translator's Note*:—Cf. the modern "venereal specialist," etc.

attacked by it, but they flee the very sight of them, as they would the most desperate malady. Finally, amid this consternation of the physicians, the surgeons hesitate to lend a hand in a case where treatment is so difficult." These circumstances sufficiently explain why it is that the early stages of the venereal leprosy have remained shrouded in so much obscurity, and why the plague was so poorly observed in all countries where it first made its appearance.

We hold, however, the key to the enigma, and we have but to consult the traditions of the Courts of Miracles and of the houses of debauchery in order to learn in what fashion it was, under the influence of Prostitution, that the monster, the Proteus of syphilis, was engendered and multiplied tenfold. There is undoubtedly an element of scientific truth in those anecdotes which the great physicians did not disdain to collect from men in the street. Manardi of Ferrera, in a letter addressed about 1525 to Santanna, a surgeon who devoted his attention to the treating of venereal patients, informs the latter that the most ancient and best established opinion assigns the beginning of the plague to the period when Charles VIII was preparing for the war on Italy (about 1493): "This malady," he says, "first broke out at Valencia in Spain, through the deed of a famous courtesan, who, for the price of fifty crowns in gold, accorded her favors to a leprous knight; this woman, having been infected, infected in her turn all the youth who came to see her, of whom more than four hundred were shortly afflicted with the same disease. Some of them, having followed King Charles into Italy, bore with them there this terrible malady." Manardi limits himself to reporting the incident, like the learned naturalist-physician Pierre-André Mathioli, who merely changes the characters and the scene: "Some," he says, "have written that the French had contracted this malady by unclean relations with a leprous woman when they were crossing a mountain in Italy," (see his treatise *De Morbo Gallico*). The identity of the syphilis with the leprosy was clearly indicated by the simple deduction of common sense; but learned men in accepting these explanations, shut their eyes to facts which should have put them on the right path. Another physician of Ferrera, Antonio Mussa Brassavola, admits the probable pre-existence of the venereal maladies and of the communicating virus, when he relates the following fact in his book on the *French Plague*: "In the camp of the French before Naples, there was a very famous and very beautiful courtesan, who

had a sordid ulcer at the orifice of her matrix. The men who had relations with her contracted a malignant affection, which ulcerated their virile members. A number of men were soon affected, and a number of women, having cohabited with these men, also contracted this disease, which they in turn gave to other men." Thus, according to Brassavola, the plague of Naples was but an accidental complication of the venereal evil which had existed in an isolated state in certain individuals before becoming epidemic and manifesting a prodigious activity.

Finally, one of the greatest forerunners of the medical art, Theophrastus Paracelsus, proclaimed a whole new doctrine on the subject of the venereal maladies, when he announced their affinity with the leprosy, in his *Grande Chirurgie* (Book I, Chapter 7): "The *vérole*," he says, with that conviction which genius alone can confer, "had its origin in the unclean relations of leprous Frenchman with a courtesan who had venereal buboes, and who afterwards infected all those who had relations with her. It is thus," continues this clever and daring observer, "it is thus that the *vérole* comes from the leprosy and the venereal buboes, almost as the race of mules comes from the copulation of a horse and a she ass, and by contagion it is spread throughout the universe." There was, in this passage of the *Grande Chirurgie*, more logic and more science than in all the writings of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries concerning the venereal maladies, the true origin of which no physician had divined. Paracelsus, then, looked upon the *vérole* of 1494 as a new species in the ancient family of venereal maladies.

CHAPTER LIX

WHAT were the symptoms, what was the medical treatment of the plague of Naples at the time it first made its appearance? It is not necessary for us to assume that this horrible plague, which was looked upon at first as incurable, possessed in the beginning the same character or the same aspect as it did at the time of its ascendancy and in its stationary period. It might be said, without fear of paradox, that the malady, with certain exceptions, dependent upon certain eccentric circumstances, is the same today that it was before the monstrous combination of the leprosy and the venereal virus was effected. From the year 1540, according to the statement of Guicciardini, who reported the origin of the epidemic in the year 1494, the malady "had become greatly mollified and had been changed into a number of species different from the first." In the beginning, that is to say, in the period of time following the sudden and almost universal outbreak of this unknown disease, which the physicians looked upon as a *pestilence*, the symptoms well merited the terror which they inspired; and we can understand how, in all the countries where the malady had broken out, police laws came to be enacted in imitation of those which had formerly been in force against leprosy with the object of cutting off from the society of the living, the unfortunate victims of this shameful plague. It was supposed, moreover, that the contagion was more immediate and more inevitable than in any other malady of the sort; it was not known whether the disease was only transmitted by carnal conjunction or not; it was imagined that the breath, the very glance of the victim, might communicate the infection.

All the physicians who observed the malady between the years 1494 and 1514, commonly regarded as the first years of its invasion and development, appear to have been frightened by their own observations; they agreed with one another and repeated one another's words, almost, in their descriptions of the syphilitic symptoms, which could not have been equally recognizable in all patients, but which were looked upon, nevertheless, as forming the primitive constitution of

the Plague of Naples. Jérôme Fracastor has admirably summed up the treatises of Leoniceno, of Torrella, of Cataneo and of Almenar, his contemporaries, in his book *De Morbis Contagiosis*, in which he describes the symptoms which he himself had been able to observe, when he was a student of medicine and a professor of philosophy in the University of Verona. Fracastor thus concludes the frightful picture which he gives us of the Plague of Naples at the time of its origin: "The patients were sorrowful, tired and downcast; they had pale faces. The majority of them had chancres on their shameful parts, and these chancres were stubborn; when they had been cured in one place, they would reappear in another, and the cure always had to be begun over again. Afterwards, crusted pustules appeared upon the skin; they commenced in some by attacking the head, which was the place where they most commonly appeared; in others, they appeared elsewhere. At first they were small, growing little by little to the size of a nutshell, which they resembled in appearance; in some, these pustules were small and dry; in others, they were gross and humid; in some livid, in others whitish and a little pale in color; in still others, hard and reddish. They would open after a few days and would give forth continually an incredible quantity of a vile and stinking liquor. When they were opened, they became true phagedenic ulcers, which consumed not only the flesh, but also the bone. Those whose upper parts were attacked had malign fluxions, which ate away sometimes the palate, sometimes the tracheal artery, sometimes the gullet, sometimes the tonsils. Some lost their lips, others the nose, others the eyes, others all the shameful parts. A great number suffered from gummous tumors, which greatly disfigured them, and which were often of the size of an egg or a biscuit. When opened, they gave forth a white and mucilaginous fluid. They attacked principally the arms and the legs; sometimes they ulcerated; sometimes they became callous until death resulted. But as though this were not sufficient, there was also great pain in the members; this pain frequently accompanied the pustules; sometimes it preceded them and sometimes followed them. These pains, which were prolonged and insupportable, were felt principally at night, and were not located in the joints, but in the members themselves and in the nerves. Some, however, had pustules without pain; others pain without pustules; the majority had both pustules and pain. All the members, however, were in a state of languor; the patients were emaciated,

without appetite and did not sleep, being always sad and of a melancholy humor and desiring always to remain in bed. The face and the legs became inflamed. A slight fever sometimes was manifested; but this was rare. Some suffered from pains in the head, a prolonged pain, and one that yielded to no remedy." We regret having to employ the flat and incorrect translation of the good Jault, who, considering that he had Astruc under his eyes, gives a very weak idea of Fracastor's firm, elegant, poetic style, but we have preferred to leave to a member of the profession the task of giving here a medical rather than a literary translation. Can one, after the reading of this characteristic description, conceive the learned Fracastor's denying, in the same work, the striking analogy which existed between the leprosy and the Plague of Naples? The latter, being no more than a complication of the leprosy under the influence of the venereal virus, must have had an intimate relation to the *peste inguinale* of the sixteenth century and the *mal des ardents* of the nineteenth, which also were but epidemic transformations of the elephantiasis. But the Plague of Naples, from the year 1514, underwent metamorphoses of its own, produced undoubtedly by what we shall term the growth of species in the malady. Jean de Vigo is the first to cite the osseous scirrhi which the patients experienced a year or less after the atrocious internal pains of their members. These scirrhi, which greatly tormented the patient, especially during the night, always ended in caries of the dorsal vertebrae. Pietro Manardi, who treated with great cleverness the syphilitic maladies about the same time as Jean de Vigo (1514 to 1526), observes new symptoms denotative of the venereal virus: "The principal sign of the French plague," he says in Chapter V of his treatise *De Morbo Gallico*, "consists in pustules, which are manifest on the extremity of the virile organ in men, at the entrance of the vulva or at the neck of the matrix in women, and in an itching of the parts which contain the semen. Most often these pustules are ulcerated; I say *most often*, because I have seen patients in whom they were as hard as warts or nails." It would appear that, during this second period, the Plague of Naples, despite certain symptomatic variations, always preserved its intensity; but from 1526 to 1540, it entered upon a period of diminution, although the venereal evil was still marked by tumors of the inguinal glands and by falling out of the hair. "Sometimes the virus makes its appearance in the loins in the form of tumefied glands," says the French physician

Antoine Lecoq, who published in 1540 his *De Ligno Sancto*,* "if the tumor suppurates, this is often a good thing. This malady is called *bubon* (buboes); others call it *poulain* (foal or colt), as a form of raillery against those who are attacked with it, since the latter walked by spreading out their legs as though they were on horseback." As to the falling out of the hair, this might be attributed less to the malady itself than to the mercurial treatment of it. "During the last six years or thereabouts," remarked Fracastor in 1546, "the malady has once more changed considerably. We no longer see pustules except in very few patients, along with almost no pain, or very slight pains, but with many gummous tumors. A thing which astonishes everybody is the falling out of the hair on the head and on other parts of the body. . . . It is even worse at present; the teeth become loose in many and in some cases fall out." This was evidently the consequence of the employment of mercury in Italian medication; but in France, where the use of vegetable remedies and especially of *lignum vitae* was prevalent, the accidental symptoms of the malady differed in an essential manner, which permits us to advance the theory that the Plague of Naples, as it went further away from its source, had become exclusively venereal and had been disengaged from the leprosy, the farcin, or any other contagious affections with which it had previously formed an adulterous alliance.

We shall not pursue any further this subject of the degenerescences of the Plague of Naples; we have desired merely to make it understood that the leprosy always persisted under the mask of this new malady, and that climate, temperament and local circumstances exercised an intimate influence over both the causes and the effects of the malady. It would be futile to attempt to demonstrate, otherwise, the terrible effects of public debauchery at this period upon the health of those who indulged in it. It cannot be denied that the malady was of so contagious a nature that contagion might occur in many cases without the venereal act, which served as its ordinary vehicle; but the opinion grew that if the flu found its way in some manner or other into respectable households, the cause was inevitably to be attributed to the facts

*Cf. the Italian *legno d'India* (wood of India). See Aretino (Putnam edition), *Letters*, L: "He had come out of a love affair with a lady friend with so bad a case of syphilis that he would have been the despair of the wood of India (*averebbe fatto disperare il legno d'India*); he was covered with it from head to foot very bestially. It had embroidered his hands, enameled his face, bejeweled his neck and strung his throat with coins, so that he looked as though he were made of mosaic, etc." See Aretino, *alib*.

of Prostitution. The frequenting of women of evil life was never more dangerous than during the fifty years which followed the first appearance of the flu, for it was not until a good while later that the suspicion arose that this flu, born of some impure relation, was transmitted more surely and more rapidly by sexual relations than by any other contact. Manners were more regular in France than in Italy, and the debauchees, for whose needs the houses of Prostitution had been opened, lived absolutely beyond the circle of common life. It was among them that the Plague of Naples made its first ravages, without medicine and surgery deigning to occupy themselves with the victims by treating them, inasmuch as such treatment was looked upon as useless for the patient and shameful for the practitioner. A few ill-famed scholars, apothecaries and old procuresses, who charged heavily for their consultations and their drugs, ventured to treat the *pauvres vérolés*, as they were called, and they sometimes worked cures with the aid of empirical recipes known from time immemorial in the treatment of pustulous maladies. But it was not till 1527 that a real physician, Jacques de Bethencourt, dared to compromise himself to the point of publishing his researches and advice on the question of syphilis, in a small book entitled *New Lenten Penance, or Purgatory of the Venereal Plague* (*Nova penitentialis Quadragesima necnon purgatorium in morbum gallicum seu venereum*). Before Jacques de Bethencourt, a single French physician, who has preserved his anonymity, ventured to add a *remedy against the gross vérole* to his French paraphrase of the *Regimen Sanitatis* of Arnoul de Villeneuve, published at Lyons in 1501. One might think, from the fashion in which the medical art stood aloof from the Plague of Naples, that this formidable plague had not entered France, whereas, as a matter of fact, it was everywhere widespread, despite all the efforts of the religious, political and municipal authorities. It must be observed, however, that the malady rarely attacked respectable folk, and that it concentrated rather on those classes reproved by society, the women of an evil life, the vagabonds, the beggars, the loafers, and the infamous frequenters of the Courts of Miracles.

We find, in the records of the Parliament of Paris, under date of the 16th of March, 1497, an ordinance which informs us that the Bishop of Paris (this office was then filled by a venerable prelate named Jean Simon) had taken the initiative in measures of health which looked to the prevention of the propagation of the *grosse vérole*.

This contagious malady, "which, for two years past, has had great course in this realm, as well in this city of Paris as in other places," struck fear in the members of the medical profession, the fear that it would spread still more when springtime came. As the consequence, the Bishop had convoked, at the episcopal residence, the officers of the King, in order to submit to them his apprehensions on this score; it was decided that the matter should be referred to Parliament, and the court having been convened for the deliberation, delegated one of the royal counsellors, Martin de Bellefaye and his clerk, to further the charitable aims of the Bishop and to confer on this subject with the provost of Paris. Parliament enacted an ordinance, which was published in the streets and public places, and which contained the police measures concerning the new malady. These measures had been discussed in the presence of the Bishop of Paris, by many "great and notable personages of all estates" (*grandes et notables personages de tous estatx*). Foreigners, men as well as women, who were suffering with the *grosse vérole* were to leave the city twenty-four hours after the publication of the ordinance, under pain of the rope; they were to return either to their native country or to the place where they had resided when the malady attacked them; in order to facilitate their prompt departure, there was to be delivered to them as soon as they had left the gates of Saint-Denis or Saint-Jacques, the sum of four Parisian sous, their names being taken in writing and each being forbidden to reënter the city until he had been cured. As to the victims who resided and dwelt in Paris at the time they had been taken with the malady, they were enjoined to retire into their own houses, "without going any more about the city, by day and by night," under pain of the rope. If these victims, relegated to their own domicile, were poor and indigent, they might appeal to the curates and churchwardens of their parishes, who would provide them with the means of livelihood. On the other hand, those victims who had no asylum were required to return to the faubourg Saint-Germain-de-Prés, where a house had been rented and placed at their disposal to serve as a hospital. Still other dwellings (*demourances*) had been prepared elsewhere for impoverished women victims, who were less numerous than the men, and who undoubtedly, out of shame, endeavored to conceal as long as possible the state of their health. It had already been foreseen that the provisory hospital of Saint-Germain-de-Prés would not be sufficient, on account of the increase

in the number of patients, and the authorities promised to add to it granges and other neighboring places, in order that it might be capable of receiving all the poor ones who presented themselves. The expenses of these new leper-houses rested upon the city, where censuses were taken and a special tax was levied at need. Two responsible agents were to be placed, the one at the Porte Saint-Jacques, the other at the Porte Saint-Denis, to deliver the four Parisian sous and to inscribe the names of those who received the indemnity as they left the city. Guards were placed at all the gates of Paris in order that the victims might not return, *openly* or *secretly*. The most important article of the ordinance is the eighth, which is couched thus: "Item, the provost of Paris shall order the examiners and the sergeants, in the quarters where they are in charge, not to suffer nor to permit any of these sick to go, converse or communicate in the city. And wherever they shall find any, they shall put them out of the city, or they shall lead them to prison, to be punished corporally according to the said ordinance."

This article proves that the *grosse vérole* was looked upon as a sort of pestilence and that, from this period, there had been organized in Paris a service of public health with examiners (*examineurs*) and *sergeants*, attached to each quarter of the city, and charged with seeing that the sanitary regulations were rigorously observed. There was, however, no belief in the possibility of the air being infected, since the sick were authorized to remain in the city, provided they remained shut up in their own houses. It is probable that the houses where the sick dwelt were called to public attention by means of some external sign, such as a bundle of straw suspended from one of the windows, or it may be, a cross of black wood nailed on the door. At least, one designation of this sort was demanded of those who dwelt in houses *infected* by the *pestilence*, by an ordinance of the provost of Paris under date of the 16th of November, 1510. Although this ordinance and those of a later date relative to epidemics do not prescribe any measure of prudence regarding the places of debauchery, it is certain that these places had to be evacuated and that the doors were sealed until the state of public health had improved. It was the same with the sweating-rooms, which were closed throughout the contagion. In the course of the spring of 1497, the number of those suffering from the *grosse vérole* increased considerably, as the good Bishop had foreseen. "On Friday, the 5th of May, the Court of Parliament levied the sum of 60 Parisian pounds (about 300 francs

in our money)* on the budget of fines, and caused this sum to be sent to Sieur Nicolas Potier and others, commissioned in the matter of the *malades de Naples*, this sum to be employed in the affairs and necessities of the said patients." The records of Parliament, in which we find this fact reported, also mention, under date of the 27th of May of the same year, the remonstrances which the Bishop of Paris addressed to the Commissioners to demand of them an "alms of mercy" (*aumône en pitié*), stating that if, of the patients received in the hospital of the faubourg Saint-Germain, "there were a great number who had been cured," there were others who were still suffering cruel depravations, for "money was lacking and small alms were required for the present." The clerk of the court offered to devote to these "works of mercy" (*oeuvres pitéables*) fifteen or sixteen crowns (about 200 francs),** which had been placed at the disposition of his office for at least ten years past, and which had never been employed for any purpose. The court ordered that this sum be sent to the Bishop. This document proves that public charity had commenced to grow lax, probably for the reason that the ordinary cause of the malady was not one calculated to edify the souls of good citizens. As to the sick who had been cured, it is to be presumed that they were not true venereals, and that many beggars had passed themselves off as sick in order to share in the benefit of those four Parisian sous.

In short, the hopes which had been conceived following the Bishop's letter to Parliament were not realized, and the numerous cures which this letter claimed merely led to an increase of patients. The healthy population of Paris became frightened, and loudly demanded the expulsion of these foreign plague victims, who were a horror to see. The provost of Paris was forced to listen to this unanimous demand, and he caused to be cried to the sound of the trumpet the following ordinance (*Regist, Bleu du Châtelet* fol. 3): "Whereas it has before been published, cried and ordained, to the sound of the trumpet and by public cry, through the streets of Paris, so that none may pretend cause of ignorance; that all those sick with the *grosse vérole* should at once leave the city and go away, the foreigners into those places of which they are natives, and that the others also should leave the city, under pain of the rope; nevertheless, the said sick, in contempt of the said proclamations, have returned from all parts and are con-

*Translator's Note:—About \$60.

**Translator's Note:—About \$40.

versing, throughout the city, with healthy persons, which is a dangerous thing for the people and for the nobility which is at present at Paris: it is therefore decreed by the King and by monsieur the provost of Paris, to all the said sick of the said malady, men as well as women, that immediately after this present proclamation, they shall depart from the said city and suburbs of Paris, and shall go away, the said foreigners to make their residence in the countries and places of which they are natives, and the others beyond the walls and suburbs of the said city, under pain of being thrown into the river if they are taken, the next day. It is also enjoined on all the commissaires, quarteniers and sergeants to take or cause to be taken those who shall be found, to inflict execution upon them. Done this Monday, the 25th day of June, of the year 1498." This ordinance, which admitted no excuse, no delay and no exception, had been motivated by the presence at Paris of all the nobility (*seigneurie*), who had come to pay homage to the new King, Louis XII, and who were frightened at meeting so many sick, who could hardly be compelled to keep their houses; for their malady, however horrible it may have been, did not prevent them from moving about and enjoying the open air. Infractions of the police laws on the part of well-to-do bourgeoisie might have been winked at, had it not been obvious that the mere sight of them, looking as they did like a mass of living rotteness, would cause the city to be detested: "There was nothing but ulcers upon them," says Sauval, appropriating the expressions of Fernel, "ulcers which might have been taken for glands, to judge by their size and color, from which issued a villainous and infected mud, which almost caused the heart to stop beating; their faces were greenish-black and otherwise so covered with wounds, with scars and pustules, that nothing more hideous could possibly have been seen." (*Antiq. de Paris*, Volume III, page 27.) The learned Fernel, who lived at the end of the sixteenth century, adds that this venereal malady was so little like the one he knew in his day that he could hardly believe it was the same. "This malady," remarked in 1539 the pseudonymous author of the *Triomphe de Très-Haulte et Très Puissante Dame Vérole*, "has lost much of its first acute ferocity, and the peoples are not so belabored with it as they were."

The decree of Parliament of the sixth of March, 1497 (1496, according to the other calendar), leaves no doubt that the Plague of Naples had been prevalent throughout the realm from the year 1494, but

the date of the invasion of each particular province and the city has not yet been determined. The municipal and consular archives furnish a number of precise documents on this point. Astruc, in his great monograph, has cited only two facts, which indicate the appearance of the Plague of Naples among the Romans at Puy-en-Velay and elsewhere in the year 1496: "The malady of *las bubas*," we read in the the local records, "was brought in that year by certain Roman soldiers in Dauphiny, who were in the service of the King and of the most illustrious Duke of Orleans, into the city, their fatherland, which was still healthy and which had not yet made the acquaintance of this malady, a malady which no longer raged in Provence." In an unpublished chronicle of the city of Puy-en-Velay, the author, Estève de Mèges, a citizen of that town, reports that the *grosse vérole* had appeared for the first time at Puy in the course of the year 1496. The extract from the records is very precious in that it tends to prove that the army of Charles VIII, on its return from the expedition to Naples, had been infected with a new malady, and that this malady had manifested itself in the year 1495, all along the route followed by the riffraff of this army, which returned to France in disorganized bands following the battle of Fornova. The soldiers who brought the Plague of Naples to the Romans had, undoubtedly, formed a part of the rear guard who shut themselves up in Novara with the Duke of Orleans, and who there sustained a memorable siege for a number of months. Since the time that Astruc collected the material for this encyclopedia of the venereal maladies, a more conscientious study of the municipal archives all over France has permitted the establishment of the fact that the Plague of Naples had spread from city to city, and even to the smallest hamlets, from the year 1494, a date which agrees with the decree of the Parliament of Paris, in which it is stated, under date of the 6th of March, 1497, that "the *grosse vérole* has had great course in this realm, for the past two years (that is to say, 1495 and 1496)." Only in the great cities like Paris was rigorous treatment employed in the case of the victims, who were expelled and threatened with the lash and the gibbet; but elsewhere, the public was content with avoiding and fleeing them, and they were left to die in peace. We do not believe as more than one contemporary assures us, that the twentieth part of the population of France and of Europe was carried away by the epidemic; but, as Antonius Coccius Sabellicus wrote in 1502: "Few die of it, considering the great number of sick,

but many less among the sick are cured." Ulrich von Hutten, who had believed that he was cured, and who succumbed to the latent progress of the malady at the age of 36 years, himself stated that, of one hundred patients, barely a single one was cured, while a patient frequently relapsed into a state that was worse than his former one. (*De Morbi Gall. Curatione*, Chapter 4.) Life was more frightful than death for these unfortunate ones, who did not possess the right to live in the company of their kind, and who found neither physical remedy nor moral solace for their atrocious sufferings.

At the time of the first appearance of the Plague of Naples, it might be asserted that it was very unprofessionally treated; physicians almost everywhere abstained from treating it, declaring, like Bartolomeo Montagnana, professor of Medicine in the University of Padua, that this malady was unknown to Hippocrates, to Galen, to Avicenna, and to other ancient physicians; they had, moreover, an insurmountable aversion to the leprosy, of which the syphilis was a survival. Moreover, this shameful malady appeared to be concentrated in the abject classes, in a class which nourished so many villainous infirmities in its bosom, and there would have been little advantage in undertaking the treatment of such infirmities, born of vice, misery and debauchery. "In the cure of maladies," they said, draping themselves in their doctoral majesty, "there must first be some indication of the essence of the malady; and no indication can be drawn from a disease which is absolutely unknown." The French physicians were still more indifferent or more ignorant than those of Germany and of Italy; they entirely abandoned to charlatans of all sorts the cure (*curation*) of this malady, which appeared to them to be an insoluble problem. It was this general desertion on the part of professional men which invited the intervention of a multitude of intruders in the field of venereal treatment; after the barbers and the apothecaries, the sweating room and bathhouse-keepers, the cordwainers and cobblers became operators. Hence the various drugs, so many different methods, so many fruitless attempts at cure, so many ridiculous processes, before anyone dared to employ mercury or quicksilver, before there was any knowledge of the virtues of *lignum-vitae*. Bleedings, ablutions, plasters, purgatives, decoctions played their more or less neutral rôle, as in the majority of maladies; but massages, baths and sudorifics met with better success, at least apparently. "The best means that I have found of curing the pains and even the pustules," wrote Torrella,

who had experimented in France with anodynes, "is to make the patient sweat in a hot oven, or at least in a stove, during fifteen successive days, the patient fasting the while." In France, there was also a prodigious use of the panacea which it was thought was to be derived from the viper: a wine in which vipers had been infused and left to die; bouillon of vipers, flesh of vipers, boiled or roasted, decoctions of vipers—all were employed. It was the surgeons who came to make use of mercury in their efforts to find an energetic form of treatment for a malady which appeared to resist all treatment. Their daring efforts met with success, but the ignorance or imprudence of the operators who employed mercury in strong doses, occasioned terrible accidents, and many patients who did not die of the malady, died of the remedy. Torrella attributes to the effects of mercury the death of the Cardinal of Cirgobia and of Alfonso Borgia.

A remedy less dangerous and more certain was then sought; it was generally believed that it had been found, when chance led to the discovery in America of the antisypilitic properties of *lignum-vitae*. Ulrich von Hutten, who had been one of the first to test the efficacy of this remedy, relates that a Spanish gentleman, treasurer of a province of the island of San Domingo, being very ill of the French Plague, learned from a native of this remedy, and brought to Europe the prescription which had given him back his health. Ulrich von Hutten assigns to the year 1515 or 1517 the importation of *lignum-vitae* into Europe. This fact is differently reported in accordance with local traditions, in the notes on the curious *Voyages* of Jerome Benzoni (edition of Frankfort, 1594): "A Spaniard, who had contracted the syphilis with a native concubine, and who suffered from it cruel pains, having drunk of the water of *lignum-vitae*, which had been given to him by an Indian servant, was not only relieved of his pains but also permanently cured." From this period (1515-1517), the rumor spread throughout Europe that the Plague of Naples might finally be cured with a drug that came from America, and from then on the people, who indulged in a strange confusion in their oral chronicles, became persuaded that the remedy and the plague might have originally come from the same country. The name of *Plague of Naples* and *French Plague* could not long survive this belief, which tended to find the cradle of the plague under the tree which was its cure. The name of *grosse vérole* and *vérole* came to be employed as the terms par excellence in restoring to America what it was commonly believed was

hers by right. The first cures due to the use of *lignum-vitae* were marvelous. Nicholas Poll, physician of Charles V, affirms that three thousand desperate patients were cured under his eyes, thanks to a decoction of *lignum-vitae*, and that their cure resembled a resurrection. The great Erasmus, who had suffered a terrible attack of syphilis, accompanied with frantic pain, ulcers and caries of the bone, after having taken the mercurial treatment eleven times, was permanently cured by *lignum-vitae* within the space of thirty days. *Lignum-vitae* then came to be looked upon as a blessing from heaven, but the public was not slow in perceiving that this blessing was accompanied by grave inconveniences; venereal disease was often followed, in such a case, by a mortal consumption. Nevertheless, *lignum-vitae* had numerous partisans, until it came to be dethroned by another wood, also a product of America, and called by the natives of the country *hoaxacan*, which the Europeans call "holy wood" (*bois saint, sanctum lignum*). The latter remedy enjoyed a greater vogue in France than anywhere else; and during a part of the sixteenth century, there was an enormous consumption of this aromatic wood, which frequently justified its happy name by the extraordinary cures it wrought. For twenty-four hours the patient was given an infusion of "holy wood" cut up into fragments or grated; the decoction was taken on an empty stomach for fifteen or thirty days in succession, and produced abundant sweats, which reduced the acidity of the disease and sometimes cured it. The French physicians have written many treatises on the efficacy of *lignum-vitae* and "holy wood"; they speak of it with a sort of respect and pious admiration, but they do no more than repeat the eulogies which Ulrich von Hutten in Germany, and Francesco Delgado in Italy, had been the first to bestow upon this marvelous specific, in recognition of their own cures. "Oh, holy wood!" cried in his prayers one patient, who had been relieved, if not cured, by the happy effects of this medicine, "oh, holy wood, are you not indeed the blessed wood of the cross of the good thief!"

The cure obtained by "holy wood" or by *lignum-vitae* was not, however, so radical as to cause all traces of the malady wholly to disappear; those unfortunate ones who had escaped the acute stage of the disease were recognizable by all too certain signs, and were unable to escape the incessant and mysterious effects of the malady. Following is a sombre picture sketched by one of the supposed convalescents, the anonymous author of the *Triumphe de la Très-Haute et*

Très Puissante Dame Vérole: "Some are budding out, others are melting and corpulent, others are full of lachrymose fistulas, while others are all running with writhing drops." The same author, who endeavors to teach continence and wisdom to his readers by holding up to them "the example of those unfortunate ones who fall by their dissolute lust into the said accidents," pictures for them also the not less frightful preliminaries of the Plague of Naples: "The others being still in the suburbs of the syphilis, well laden with chancres, warts, filaments, *chauldes pisses*, chanceroous bumps, superfluous carnosities and such other trifles as one acquires and collects in the service of Dame Lechery." A long time before this singular work was published at Lyons (1539), under the pseudonym of Martin Dorchesino, French poetry had made use of the lamentable subject which Jerome Fracastor celebrated in his beautiful Virgilian and venereal poem bearing the name of the malady itself (*Syphilis Sive Morbus Gallicus*). Jean Droin of Amiens, bachelor at law, and a versifier known for two moral and Christian poems, the *Nef des Fols du Monde*, and the *Vie des Trois Maries*, composed a ballad in honor of the *grosse vérole*, and this ballad, after having made the rounds of France with the new malady, was printed at Lyons in 1512 at the end of the moral poems of Brother Guillaume-Alexis, monk of Lyre, and Prior of Bussy. The *Ballade* of Maître Jean Droin is very curious in that it accused Prostitution of having spread the Plague of Naples in France, the burden of blame for which the poet placed upon the conscience of the Lombards, which leads us to conclude that the wars of Louis XII in Italy had been even more fatal in their effect upon the health of that monarch's subjects than had the preceding expedition of Charles VIII. We believe that the quotation of this piece of verse will not be out of place here, as an example of the cheerful philosophy of our ancestors on the subject of pestilence and pleasure.

*Plaisants mignons, gorriers, esperrucats,
 Pensez à vous, amendez votre cas,
 Craignez les trous, car ils sont dangereux,
 Gentilshommes, bourgeois et advocats,
 Qui despendez ecus, salus, ducas,
 Faisant bancquetz, esbattement et jeux,
 Ayez resgard que c'est d'estre amoureux,
 Et le mettez en vostre protocole,*

*Car, pour hanter souvent en obscurs lieux,
S'est engendrée ceste grosse vérole.*

*Menez amours sagement, par compas:
Quand ce viendra a prendre le repas,
Veüe a yez nette devant les yeux,
Fuyez soussi et demenez soulas,
Et de gaudir jamais ne soyez las,
En acquerant hault renom vertueux.
Gardez vous bien de hanter gens rongneux,
Ne gens despitz, qui sont de haulte colle;
Car, pour bouter sa lance en aulcun creux,
S'est engendrée ceste gross vérole.*

*Hantez mignones qui portent grans estas,
Mais gardez-vous de monter sur le tas
Sans chandelle; ne soyez point honteux,
Fouillez, jettez, regardez hault et bas,
Et, en après, prenez tous vos esbats;
Faites ainsi que gens aventureux,
Comme dïen un grant tas de baveux,
Soyez lettrez sans aller à l'eschole,
Car, par Lombards soubtils et cauteleux,
S'est engendrée ceste grosse vérole.*

ENVOI:

*Prince, sachez que Job fut vertueux,
Mais si fut-il rongneux et grateleux,
Nous lui prions qu'il nous garde et console.
Pour corriger mondains luxurieux,
S'est engendrée ceste grosse vérole.**

**Translator's Note:*—This piece is extremely difficult to render in a form which will suggest, at once, something of the sound and the sense of the original. The following does not pretend to be a finished translation. For instance, it has been deemed best to keep the French *grosse vérole*, despite the incongruity of rhyming French and English words.

Jolly lads of syphilitic state,
Think of yourselves and mend your fate;
Beware of holes, they're a dangerous chance.
Then, gentlemen, bourgeois and advocate,
You who your health and ducats dissipate
In banquets and in dalliance,

According to the poetic rules of the French *ballade*, these three symmetrical strophes had to end with an *envoi* of five verses, addressed to a *prince*; we shall not trouble to say to what prince Droin's ballad was addressed; but it is our opinion that not a prince of the day, however austere he might have been, would have taken offense at such an envoy, all the more so that the reason that the numerous medical treatises which were appearing upon the Plague were dedicated to cardinals, bishops, and to the most august personages. But we shall find material for other historical observations in our examination of this ballad, which is certainly the oldest of French poems on the subject of the Plague of Naples; we see from it, for example, that the malady always betrayed itself by some external sign, and that the victims always bore some stigma of their defilement; we shall see, moreover, that, in the opinion of the *mondains luxurieux*, this species of obscene *rogne* was engendered by carnal conjunction, etc. It is astonishing to encounter so much justness of

Just see what happens in love's trance,
And put it in your protocol.
For if in dark places you must prance,
You're sure to get the *grosse vérole*.

Then in your loves be wise, sedate,
And when you eat, see that the plate
Is clean in every circumstance;
Flee care and always be elate,
With a joy that nothing can abate,
And seek what will your name enhance
By staying far from miscreants,
Since that is better on the whole.
If you should wrongly cast a lance,
You're sure to get the *grosse vérole*.

Haunt then those whom the world calls great,
But do not enter any gate
Without a candle; let your glance
Roam high and low in some debate;
Then take your pleasure with your mate
And equal all the arrogance
And all the gay exuberance
Of those unschooled who play their role.
But beware of a Lombard countenance,
Or you're sure to get the *grosse vérole*.

ENVOI

Remember, Prince, Job's temperance;
Though he had many a protuberance,
We pray him still to keep us and console.
It is for morals' maintenance,
You're sure to get the *grosse vérole*.

observation in a poet at a period when the physicians themselves believed that the disease was propagated through the air and by simple contact; the prejudice on this score was even more strongly established among the people, who with their native good sense, compared the syphilis with the leprosy, the daughter with the mother. Two centuries later, the Abbot of Saint-Martin, who was the living embodiment of all the popular prejudices, repeated naïvely what had been told him by his nurse, which he attributed to his friend Jean de Lorme, the first physician to the King: "It is to be remarked that the *vérole* is contracted by touching a person who has it, in sleeping with one who has it, in walking barefoot upon his spit, and in many other ways." (*Moyens faciles et éprouvez dont M. de Lorme, premier medecin et ordinaire de trois de nos roys . . s'est servi pour vivre tres de cent ans.* Caen, 1682, in-12, p. 341).

Jean Droin was not the only French poet to sing of the Plague of Naples before Fracastor's time. Jean Le Maire de Belges, a friend of Clément Marot and of François Rabelais, historiographer and poet *indiciaire* of Margaret of Austria, translated into rhyme a *conte* entitled *Cupido et Atropos*, which Serefino had published in Italian verse, on the strange and hideous effects of his contagion born of pleasure; he added to the original *conte* two others of his own invention, equally allegoric and devoted to the quarrel of Love and Death. We borrow from the work of Jean Le Maire, which appeared in 1520, a vigorous description of the ravages of this malady among those who were tainted with it:

*Mais, en la fin, quand le venin fut meur,
Il leur naissoit de gros boutons sans fleur,
Si très hideux, si laids et si énormes,
Qu'on ne vit onc visages si difformes,
N'onc ne receut si très mortelle injure
Nature humaine en sa belle figure.
Au front, au col, au menton et au nez,
Onc on ne vit tant de gens boutonnez.
Et qui pis est, ce venin tant nuisible,
Par sa malice occulte et invisible,
Alloit chercher les veines et artères,
Et leur causoit si estranges mystères,
Dangier, douleur de passion et goutte,*

*Qu'on n'y savoit remède, somme toute,
Hors de crier, souspirer, lamenter,
Plorer et plaindre et mort souhaiter.**

Jean Le Maire, who was, as a poet, the elegant precursor of Clément Marot, his disciple, introduced into his verses, which were often well turned, the villianously hybrid word, *gorre*, alluding to what the wits of the time termed the *souvenir*, in "memory" of the conquest of Naples, where the French army had contracted it. Three allegorical tales of Cupid and Atropos were reprinted in 1539 at the head of the *Triumphe de Très Haute et Très Puissante Dame Vérole Royne de Poy d'Amours*. This "*Triumphe*" is none other than a series of thirty-four wooden figures representing the principal accompaniments and accessories of the Plague of Naples and its treatment; here we have Venus, Pleasure, Cupid; there the physicians or *refondeurs*, diet, etc. These figures, composed and executed in the style of a Dance Macabre, are accompanied by rondeaux and by dizaines and huitaines very cleverly put together; so cleverly that the author, Martin Dorchesino, could have been none other than Rabelais, whose spirit and style are so unmishtakable, and who, about this period, was a resident of Lyons, where he practiced medicine and composed merry chronicles for the profit of the *pauvres goutteux et vèroles tres precieux* (poor gouty ones and beloved syphilitics).**

Martin Dorchesino or D'Orchesino, who describes himself as the "inventor of little honest pleasures" (*inventeur des menus plaisirs honêtes*), has the herald at arms cry, in his *Triumphe*, published in

*Translator's Note:—

But in the end, when the venom showed its power,
There grew upon them great buds without flower,
So hideous and of such enormity
That one never saw faces of such deformity,
Nor never did human nature receive
An indignity which caused it so to grieve.
On brow, on neck, on chin and on the nose,
In every spot, a horrible bud grows,
And, what is worse, this venom very keen
Thrives by a malice hidden and unseen;
Going to seek the arteries and veins,
It gives them strange and very mysterious pains,
A dangerous, dolorous and passionate gout,
For which there is no remedy, I doubt,
Except to cry and sigh and spend your breath,
Complain and implore, and fiercely long for death.

**Translator's Note:—It may be stated that there is no scholarly basis for the assumption put forth here.

1539, at Lyons, by François Juste (*devant Nostre-Dame de Confort*):

*Sortez, sailles des limbes ténébreux,
Des fournaux chauds et sepulchres umbreux,
Où, pour suer, de gris et verd on gresse
Tous veroléz! se goutte ne vous presse,
Nudz et vestuz, fault delaisser vos creux,
De toutes parts!**

François Rabelais, who describes himself as an “abstractor of quintessence” (*abstracteur de quinte essence*), in his *Pantagruel*, published for the first time in 1535 by François Juste, who was also the publisher of the *Triumphe*, had said: “What shall I say of those poor syphilitics and gouty ones? Oh, how many times have we seen them, when they were well anointed and greased to a fare-you-well, their faces shining like a smokehouse-lock, their teeth jumping up like the keys of an organ-board or spinet that is being played upon, and their gullets foaming like a wild boar which the hounds have cornered in the nets! And what did they do then? All the consolation they had was to listen to the reading of a few pages of that same Book; and we have seen some who will give themselves to a hundred big barrellfuls of old devils, if they did not feel an obvious relief at the reading of that Book while they were being held in the Limboes,—neither more nor less than women who are in a family way do, when some one reads to them the *Life of Saint Margaret*.”**

*Translator's Note:—

Come out from those dark purgatories,
Those steaming stoves and those dark mortal throes,
Where, to make them sweat, they grease with gray and green
All syphilitics! Unless your gout's too keen,
Naked or clad, you must yourselves disclose
On every side!

**Translator's Note:—The Urquhart and Motteux translation of this passage is as follows:

“But what shall I say of those poor men that are plagued with the pox and the gout? O, how often have we seen them, even immediately after they were anointed and thoroughly greased, till their faces did glisten like the keyhole of a powdering tub, their teeth danced like the jacks of a pair of little organs or virginals when they are played upon, and that they foamed from their very throat like a boar which the mongrel mastiff-hounds have driven in and overthrown amongst the toils,—what did they then? All their consolation was to have some page of the said jolly book read unto them, and we have seen those who have given themselves to a hundred puncheons of old devils, in case that they did not feel a manifest ease and assuagement of pain at the hearing of the said book read, even when they were kept in a purgatory of torment; no more nor less than women in travail used to find their sorrow abated when the life of St. Margaret is read unto them.

These passages drawn from two works which we attribute to the same author, prove that syphilitic patients were numerous at Lyons in the clientele of Rabelais, and that he treated them in the limboes (*limbes*) by means of mercurial frictions rather than with *lignum-vitæ* and "holy wood."

It is in the *Triumphe* that we find a souvenir of the venereal epidemic which had desolated the city of Rouen and the province of Normandy in 1527, and which Jacques Bethencourt had treated with success, employing nothing but mercury. "*Vérole*, the bellicose Empress," says Dorchesino in his *Prologue*, "draws after her triumphal chariot a number of great cities, taken by force and reduced to subjection, especially the city of Rouen, capital of Normandy, where she has won many followers, as they say, and published her laws and edicts most profusely." This invasion of the malady, which made its appearance this time with new symptoms, since children themselves were attacked by it, left its mark upon the popular speech, in which for a long time the phrase, *vérole de Rouen*, was employed to designate the worst variety and the one that most resisted treatment. The following verses were to be read above the image of the *Gorre de Rouen*:

*Sur toutes villes de renom
Où l'on tient d'amour bonne guyse,
Midieux Rouen porte le nom
De veroller la marchandise.
La fine fleur de paillardise,
On la doit mommer meshouen (maintenant):
Au Puy d'Amour prens ma devise:
Je suis la Gorre de Rouen!**

Rabelais, in his old age, remembered once more, in writing his fifth book of *Pantagruel*,** this terrible *gorre* which he had perhaps observed upon the spot in 1527; for he cites, in his list of impossible things, the

*Translator's Note:—

Among all cities of renown,
Where love goes brave and free,
There's none more famous than Rouen town,
For the fruits of venery.
If the fine flower you would see,
I bid you gaze upon
The Well of Love and its blazonry:
The syphilis of Rouen.

**Translator's Note:—We now know that only portions of this book are Rabelais'.

feat of a young "abstractor of quintessence" who boasted of being able to "cure the syphilitic of Rouen, as you might say." A century later, the proverb had survived the epidemic, and Sorel, in his romance of *Francion* (Book X), bore witness that "the *vérole* of Rouen and the dung of Paris are of one and the same cloth."

Although a number of eminent personages and some of very honorable character had been, one does not understand just how, the known victims of this obscene malady, it is difficult to deny the fact that Prostitution was the principal source of contagion, and that the bad houses served as a permanent reservoir of the most redoubtable varieties of the flu. Prostitution was by no means subjected to proper, sanitary regulations, and it is necessary to come down to 1684 to find an ordinance the apparent object of which is the good health of the inmates of houses of debauchery. It is easy to appreciate the evil effects which this carelessness on the part of the authorities could not fail to exert upon public health; for in abandoning to chance the unfortunate libertines who went, so to speak, to the very source of the evil, the authorities thereby exposed to inevitable dangers the legitimate wives of these imprudent ones and their poor children, to whom they bequeathed an incurable and hereditary virus. At the beginning of the epidemic, as we have seen, the patients were shut up in a sort of lazaret house, and were expelled from the cities where their mere presence was looked upon as contagious. This general expulsion of the *pauvres vérolés* contributed necessarily to the spread of the infection in the country districts.

But when experience had demonstrated the fact that the venereal evil could not be contracted except by carnal relations or by some intimate and immediate contact, no further inconvenience was seen in permitting these sad and shameful victims to go on dwelling in the cities and among healthy persons, since their very aspect was a warning against libertinism. There is no certain date to be assigned for this change in public opinion and in police regulations regarding the Plague of Naples and the unfortunate ones who were afflicted with it. In the records of the Parliament of Paris, we read, under date of the 22nd of August, 1505, a decree which authorizes the taking from the budget of fines of a sum necessary for the establishment of a house "for the lodging of syphilitics" (*pour y loger les vérolés*). This decree, the last which makes mention of these temporary hospitals, informs us that the asylum which had been opened for patients in the fau-

bourg Saint-Germain was no longer sufficient. It may be supposed that, within a few years' time, at the instigation of the physicians, who had made a more thorough study of the principle of the venereal maladies, those who had contracted at Paris either the *grosse vérole* or some other syphilitic taint were admitted along with other patients without distinction. We pass thus from one extremity to another, and fall from one excess into a worse one. At the Hôtel-Dieu, the patients to the number of four and even six slept in the same bed; syphilis took a great number who had entered the hospital as the victims of fever or catarrh, and who left it crippled and *courbassés*, by the syphilitic virus or by mercury. The list of patients, therefore, grew, although the malady had diminished in intensity. The Hôtel-Dieu of Paris was soon not large enough to hold them all, and the authorities had to think of erecting new hospitals especially destined for venereal treatment. This first hospital was established in 1536, by decree of Parliament, upon the report of the commissioners charged with the policing of the poor. Two halls of the great Hôpital de la Trinité were turned over for this purpose: The large upper hall, "where the custom was to play farces and games," was devoted to "the lodging of the infected and syphilitic; the lower hall, to the lodging and retreat of those who are sick of the ringworm (*teignes*), of an evil which is called *Saint Main*, *Saint Fiacre*, and other contagious maladies."

A few months after the opening of this hospital, room was lacking to receive all the patients who presented themselves. Parliament, by decree of the third of March, 1537, ordered the church-wardens of Saint Eustache to devote the hospital of the parish to the lodging of the "poor syphilitic and those who are suffering from those maladies which are called Saint Main, Saint Fiacre and others of the same contagious sort." But there was not yet at Paris, despite these foundations, a hospital exclusively reserved for the venereal malady, although the city of Toulouse had possessed one from the year 1528, called, in the language of the country, *l'hospital das rognousés de la rongo de Naples*. (See the *Mém. de l'Hist. du Languedoc*, by Guill. de Catel, p. 237.) As new refuges for the *pauvres malades de vérole* were opened, it became possible to determine the ravages of the malady among the lower classes, and especially among the vagabonds. Human compassion counseled, for the solace of this suffering multitude, their removal from the sight of and contact with healthy folk and

respectable people. Hospitals sprung up everywhere, and in them, as in prisons, were accumulated all the poor who were thought to be afflicted with contagious maladies. The public came to repent having suppressed too lightly police measures relating to lepers and syphilitics; a little later it was perceived that the difference between these maladies was, perhaps, not so great, and the idea was conceived of instituting once more the old regime of lazaret houses. It was with this thought in mind that there was organized for the *povres véroléz* at Paris the great hospital of Saint-Nicolas, near the Bièvre, in the parish of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet. But the resources of this hospital had not been calculated to meet the daily increase in the number of patients, and this number had increased in 1540 to 660; the linen and other necessary things, which the masters and governors of the Hôtel-Dieu were called upon to furnish, came to be wholly lacking. The Parliament of Paris took pity on these patients, "who were in great necessity;" it cited before it the masters and governors of the Hôtel-Dieu, and ordered them to provide for the needs of the hospital of Saint-Nicolas. (See the *Preuves de l'Hist. de Paris*, of Felibien and Lobineau, Vol. IV, p. 689 and 697.)

This hospital took the name of *Hôpital de Lourcines*, and to it were sent all the syphilitics who presented themselves at the Bureau of the Poor and at the Hôtel-Dieu of Paris, where, up to then, they had been "put in the same bed with those not tainted with this malady." Such was the origin of the Hôpital des Veneriens, and a decree of Parliament under date of December 25, 1559, informs us that M. Pierre Galandius "had formerly been retained to keep" the said Hôpital de Lourcines, where were nourished, lodged, dressed and treated the "syphilitic folk" (*gens vérolés*.—*Preuves de l'Hist. de Paris*, Vol. IV, p. 788.) At the same time, an effort was launched to secure a privy charter for the benefit of all the sick of this sort, and an effort was also made to have the wandering lepers returned to the hospitals or lazaret houses; for these vagabonds had contributed all too much to corrupting the public health, by being permitted to live freely in the midst of the healthy population. Francis I, by an ordinance of the 19th of December, 1543, desired to "remedy the great disorder" of these leper houses, and endeavored to confine in them, as had formerly been done, the begging lepers and those who clacked their sticks* (*cliquettaient*) through the towns and villages. It was too late to restore to the State

**Translator's Note*.—The means by which the leper announced his approach.

the goods belonging to public charity, which had been appropriated for more than a century by individuals. Moreover, of what use were leper houses when there were no more lepers? As a matter of fact, even those who carried the *cliquette* and casks were only recent or inveterate venereals. Leprosy and syphilis had made common cause, so much so that Henry IV, by an edict of 1606, assigned what remained of the leper houses "for the entertainment of poor gentlemen and crippled soldiers." But it is not evident that Henry IV, who suffered for more than ten years with a virulent gonorrhea, looked upon the *grosse vérole* as a natural heir of leprosy, although he assigned certain revenues for the treatment of patients. At this period, all the syphilitics were not in the hospitals, and it might be said that Prostitution, which had peopled the Courts of Miracles, now took upon itself the task of depopulating them, by reviving in them incessantly the ancient virus of leprosy and the new virus of syphilis.

CHAPTER LX

THE trouvères of the thirteenth century, as we have said, were the poets of Prostitution; their *lais* and their *fabliaux*, which reflected the license of their manners and the obscenity of their speech, exercised a sorry influence over the written language, as over the manners of the people. Manners, instead of becoming purified, became still more perverted from the example of those who had won a place of honor by their smutty *contes*, which were greatly to the taste of the light-hearted French; the language not only remained laden with numerous vile words and immodest locutions, but it had also come to express by preference the commonplaces of carnal love, if we may designate thus that dull and monotonous outburst of poetic amorousness which was the delight of the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. The editors of Rutebeuf, M. Achille Jubinal and his predecessor Méon, did not dare to publish, even by replacing free words with others, a number of singular pieces which tend to prove that this brazen trouvère did not concern himself greatly with respecting the ears of his auditors. We shall send those who are curious regarding this species of literature to the celebrated manuscript of the Imperial Library, Codex 7218, *Ancien Fonds du Roi*, in which they will find, in folio 215, the *Dit du c. et de la c.*, which begins thus:

*Une c. . . et un v. . . s'esmurent
A un marchié ou aller durent. . . ;*

or to folio 24, the *Dit des c.*, addressed to a seigneur who is a little more delicate, the beginning of which we give:

*Signor, qui les bons c. . . savés,
Qui savés que li c. . . est tels. . . ;*

or to folio 183, the *Dit du c. et du c.*, the first two verses of which herald a licentious controversy:

*L'autre hier, me vint en avison
Que li c. . . demandoit au c. . .*

The obscene terms and indecent images, which the trouvères so readily employed, would not have been out of place perhaps, in the

contes gaillards; but by force of habit, we see them figuring also in the most serious and even the most moral works. We have already quoted a number of passages from an old translation of the Bible, by way of showing how the profane writers and poets always smelled of the bad company they kept. This impropriety of words was, however, not perceptible to all, and many women of good life and manners, many grave men and venerable persons, carried their love of frankness so far as not to be scandalized at these trivial or indecent locutions, which had crept at once into the written and the spoken language. One must have possessed a degree of delicacy which would have been exceptional at this period to blush or take offense at this naïve grossness of expression, which custom had rendered almost universal, as the words of writers passed into the common speech.

Following is the manner in which the wise *preude dame* Christine de Pisan defends herself against the charge of having marred her poetic and moral works with this shameful Prostitution of language. She replies, to the "very notable and sufficient persons," Maître Gontier Col, secretary to King Charles V, and others: "You assert that it is unreasonable for me to blame what is said in the *Roman de la Rose*, in the section on Reason, where it names the secret members of men by their names, and relates there what I formerly said elsewhere: that God had created all things good, but that, through the sinful pollution of our first parents, man had become an unclean thing; and I gave the example of Lucifer, whose name is beautiful and whose person is horrible; and in conclusion, I said that the name did not confer indecency upon the thing, but that the thing made the name indecent; and from this, you say that I am like the pelican, which slays with its beak. So, draw your conclusion, and say: if the thing then makes the name indecent, what name can I give to the thing which would not be indecent? To this I will reply, broadly, and without saying any more, for to tell the truth I am no logician: there is no need of such discussions. I must confess to you that I am in no manner able to speak of indecency or corrupted will, and that whatever name I may give even to the secret members or any other indecent thing, that name is not indecent; and always if, in certain cases of malady or other necessity, it becomes necessary to speak of it, I shall speak of it in a manner that will show what I desire to say, and I shall not speak of it indecently."

Christine de Pisan did not hesitate to enter upon a very arduous and thorny dissertation regarding the cases in which it is permissible

to name by their names the indecent things, and she ended by establishing the principle that indecency of heart alone gives indecency to expression; but in treating this difficult subject, she did not perceive that she herself had fallen into the very fault with which she reproaches Jean de Meung and the poets of his school. For she herself makes use of low and indecent words which contrast with the purity of her intention. The *Roman de la Rose*, which Christine de Pisan attacks thus in her epistles (*Ms de la Bibl. Imp.*, codex 7217, Ancien Fonds), might have been accused with good right of having exerted an unfortunate influence over decency of language and over the state of public manners. It may be added, however, that the *Roman de la Rose* was for more than two centuries the gospel of French gallantry.

The author of the first part of this famous romance, Guillaume de Lorris, who died toward the end of the thirteenth century, leaving his poem uncompleted, had intended to compose, under an allegoric form, a sort of *Art of Love* in the style of his age; nevertheless, he was not blind to the dangers of a passion which is sometimes a terrible and incurable evil:

*Rien n'y vaut herbe ne racine;
Seul fuir en est la médecine.**

He knew, perhaps by experience, that the love which he had painted under such seductive colors was epidemic among the poets of the age:

*Maints y perdent, bien dire l'oz,
Sens, temps, chastel, corps, ame et loz.***

Guillaume de Lorris had need to mitigate the voluptuous contagion of his subject by reflections full of wisdom and by a wealth of noble sentiments; but he failed in his object, and the foolish youths who became enthusiastic over the *Roman de la Rose*,

*Où l'art d'amour est tout enclose,****

sought in it for examples of libertinism rather than for precepts of virtue and morality. The poet paused in his erotic labors, after hav-

*Translator's Note:— No herb or root will cure the ill;
To flee it is the only pill.

**Translator's Note:— Many there lose, to tell the truth,
Sense, soul and body to their ruth.

***Translator's Note:—Where the art of love is all contained.

ing finished four thousand verses; another poet then came along to complete the work. Jean de Meung, called Clopinel, because he was lame, continued the romance which had been begun by Guillaume de Lorris. Jean de Meung undoubtedly departed from the original plan. The author no longer prided himself upon drawing his inspiration from Ovid and the classic poets of love; under pretext of morality and satire, he proceeded to indulge in a filthy torrent of abuse directed at women, and in order to save his readers from the dangerous reefs of gallantry, he could conceive of nothing better than to show them in the nude, so to speak, all the amorous snares of those sirens who strove to betray at once the souls and bodies of their victims. Jean de Meung was, assuredly, not a Dominican monk, as has been supposed from the fact that he had been cloistered in the Jacobin convent in the rue Saint-Jacques. He was a doctor and a master of arts of the University of Paris; for his apologist, the Prior of Salon, pictures him for us as seated in his garden of la Tournelle and clad in an ermine-lined cape, "like some man of honor," as the bibliographer, Antoine Du Verdier, remarks. He had learned in the schools to call things by their names, and he made no scruples, despite his good intentions, of employing the most obscene terms, and of painting love under the most lubricious hues, disdaining every sort of veil. He boasted, nevertheless, despite the intemperance of his verse, of being a worthy gentleman:

*Au coeur gentil au coeur isnel (dispos).**

But if the *Roman de la Rose* was the favorite reading of young libertines the ladies and the demoiselles who also read it in secret could not pardon the author for having outraged them, notably in a long declamation against the feminine sex, which ends with these two verses:

*Saïges femmes, par Saint Denis!
En est autant que de phénix.***

These ladies, those of the court particularly, resolved to chastise him with their own hands, for the judgment he had passed upon them lay heavy on their hearts, a rather rigorous judgment, which the poet had dared to pronounce upon their sex in general:

*Translator's Note:— Of gentle heart, heart well disposed.

**Translator's Note:— Good women? By St. Denis, where?
The phoenix itself is not more rare.

*Toupes estes, serez ou fustes,
De faict ou de volenté, putes.**

The vengeance of the ladies has been related by André Thevet in the *Vrais Portraits et Vies des Hommes Illustres* (Paris, Kerver, 1584, two volumes, in fol.); and the tradition relating to this occurrence was so widespread that Antoine du Verdier, Sire of Vaupripas, who published almost at the same time, at Lyons, his *Bibliothèque Francoise*, has related in it the misadventure of Jean Clopinel. The narrative of Du Verdier is much better known than that of André Thevet; it is also more circumstantial, and it is this latter reason especially which induces us to reproduce it textually here, in order to prove that from the time of Philip the Handsome the ladies of the court possessed no better a renown than the professionally amorous ones:

“Maitre Jean de Meung, having come to the court for some occasion, was by the ladies arrested in one of the chambers of the King’s dwelling, being surrounded by a number of lords, who, to win the good graces of the fair ones, had promised to aid and not to prevent the punishment which the latter desired to execute; but Jean de Meung, beholding them with rods in their hands and pressing the gentlemen to make him strip, he required of them to bestow upon him a gift, swearing that he would not ask a remission of the punishment which they intended to inflict upon him (which he had not merited), but something which, on the contrary, would enhance that punishment. The which was accorded him at some pain and on the insistent request of the lords present. Then Maître Jean began: ‘Ladies, since it seems that I must receive chastisement, that chastisement should come from those whom I have offended. Now, have I not spoken only of the misdoers, and not of you, since all of you here are beautiful, wise and virtuous; and so, why not let the one among you who feels that she has been the most offended begin by striking me, as being the biggest whore among all those whom I have blamed.’ He could not find among them a single one who desired to have this honor, fearing to bear that infamous title, and so Maître Jean escaped, leaving the ladies in shame and giving to the lords there present great enough occasion for laughter, for there were among them those who felt that this or that lady should have been the one to begin.”

*Translator’s Note:—All are, will be or have been
Whores in fact or will, I ween.

The *Roman de la Rose*, in which erotic details and obscene words abound, was to the French of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, what Ovid's poem had been for the Romans. It was to be found transcribed upon beautiful parchment and adorned with miniatures in all the *librairies* of the hôtels and châteaux. It was known by heart and quoted on every occasion, and from it were drawn, as from a well of refined gallantry, all instructions in the art of love. But this celebrated romance, which had, nevertheless, a moral end, was nevertheless placed upon the index by the *preudes femmes* and by the *gens de bonne vie*; and there was a multitude of poets and proseurs who, undoubtedly at the instigation of the ladies, came forward to refute its veiled and indecent accusations.

The two most famous antagonists of the *Roman de la Rose* were Christine de Pisan and Martin Lefranc, who, while paying full tribute to the talent of the author, reproached him with injustice to women and with having wallowed in the sty of Prostitution. Following is the judgment which the virtuous Christine pronounced upon this book, which she would have liked to annihilate: "Since in its nature descends to evil, I say that it may be the cause of very abominable manners, comforting a dissolute life, a doctrine full of deceit, as of damnation, a public defamer, cause of suspicion and miscreancy, and the shame of many persons, full of error and very indecent reading in many places."

Christine de Pisan lived at a period less depraved than that in which Jean de Meung had pictured the woman as "vessel, retreat and inn of all vices" (*vaissel, retrait, et héberge de tous vices*). Manners under the reign of Charles the Wise were more decent than during preceding reigns; nevertheless, civil Prostitution was a constant threat, as the good dame Christine says, who, in her *Cité des Dames*, desired to prove that her sex was better than the other in every variety of merit, and who, in her *Livre des Trois Vertus*, gave lessons in morality and *preuderie* to women of all conditions. She did not forget even the woman of evil life; she proposed to convert the latter to good and to restore to her the esteem of her neighbors along with her own self-respect: "Alas! without fail, every woman thus given to shame and sin ought well to desire to be put back into that estate, the which thing might be arranged if she would, for if she has a body strong enough to do evil and suffer so many mischances, she ought to be able to make use of it to gain her livelihood; for if she were disposed as we have said,

each one would willingly take her in, give her the means of livelihood, it being well seen to, however, that there came with her no ordure nor evil into any place, and so she might care for the bedridden and the sick, dwell in a little chamber in a good street and among good folk, and there live simply and soberly, if none ever saw her drunk, and provided there did not come from her mouth any words of whorishness (*puterie*) nor indecency, but she being always very courteous, humble, gentle and of good service to all good folk, and seeing to it that no man attract her, for she would then lose all. And by this path she might serve God and gain her life, since one honest penny is worth a hundred received in sin."

The project of reform conceived by Christine de Pisan to destroy Prostitution had no effect beyond causing the morality of its author to be more esteemed. Light women were not to be seen renouncing their degrading trade, waiting for public charity to place each one of them in a little chamber *in a good street* and to employ them in respectable labors. They remained what they had been, frequently drunken and disorderly, always quarrelsome and garrulous, always with obscene words in their mouths, and living by the fruit of their sin. Christine had no more success in her attacks on Jean de Meung and the *Roman de la Rose*, which continued to be read and admired, and which continued to serve as a breviary of the amorous and of libertines. Martin Franc, the author of the *Champion des Dames*, failed equally in the war which he declared on erotic poetry, by taking the *Roman de la Rose* as a text for his moral declamations, the object of which was the defense of the feminine sex.

Martin le Franc was, it is said, provost and canon of the church of Leuse-en-Hainault; he had professionally nothing to do with the mysteries of womankind; but being a natural-born gallant and of a very courteous disposition, he took up the cause of the ladies, in view of the insolences of Jean de Meung. His *Champion des Dames* is but one long panegyric of feminine virtue, but he too frequently borrows his vocabulary from Jean de Meung himself; and he does not fear to offend those chaste ears to whom he addresses his exhortations to purity. This goes to prove what we have said regarding the prostitution of the literary language and the indecency of the poets. As soon as one approached the *gai savoir*, one was obliged to make use of this style, which had been drawn from the bad houses. The good brother Guillaume-Alexis, monk of Lyre in Normandy, in his *Grand*

Blason des Fausses Amours, composed in the middle of the fifteenth century, is no more decent in his language than the anonymous author of the book of *Matheolus*, a French poem, composed in the fourteenth century against marriage and women by a bishop of Théroutanne.* Thus Martin le Franc, believing that he is employing, in all honor and for the profit of the ladies, the poetic jargon of his time, goes on to condemn without appeal the profane poets and their academies, known as *Puys d'amour*, since all their verses appeared to come from that unclean "Well." Here is a sample of his wrath against the *Puys d'amour*, which possessed the privilege of attracting the mob, especially in Picardy and in Hainault:

*Pour Amours balladent et riment,
Leur hault engin tout y employment,
En celle estude leurs jours liment:
Là toute vertu y desployent,
Au service d'Amours s'employent,
Comme s'il fut omnipotent:
Mal font, quant ils ne se reploient
Contre luy qui est impotent.
Avez-vous point leu en vos livres
Comment les folz payens rimoient,
Autour de Bacchus, dieu des yvres,
Et de Vénus que tant amoient?
Devant eux leurs motetz semoient,
Leurs rondeaux et serventois:
Or, fait-on pis qu'ils ne souloient
En Picardie et en Artois.***

It is then to the poets of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that we must look for a detailed picture of the manners and the *dissolute*

*Translator's Note:—All these works *pro* and *contra* the feminine sex are a part of the famous *Querelle des femmes*, which attained a peak of intensity from the middle of the fifteenth century to the eve of the Religious Wars. Rabelais' Third Book is a document on the anti-feminist side.

**Translator's Note:—

For Love they ballad and they rhyme,
And their high genius all employ,
And in such studies spend their time:
There every virtue they deploy,
And Love's service they enjoy,
As though she were sublime.
Themselves they ever must decoy
In impotent pastime.

Have you not read in your gross tomes
How foolish peasants toy
With Bacchus, god of drunken gnomes,
And Venus without alloy?
For these their motets never cloy,
Their rondeaux and their minstrelsy:
And here, I think, they more annoy
Than in Artois or in Picardy.

life of those periods; it is also from the mode of life of certain poets that we must form an opinion as to what must have been the debauched habits of those *beaux diseurs*, the majority of whom were, as Clément Marot remarked in speaking of his valet, Frippelippe, *cour-eurs de bordeaux* and *beaux joueurs de quilles*.^{*} Nearly all the poets furnish certain details for our inquiry into the public manners of the time; but since we cannot here review them all, we shall limit ourselves to extracting from the words of Coquillart and Villon, those two best poets of the fifteenth century, whatever may be of interest for a history of Prostitution.

Guillaume Coquillart, although an official of Rheims, spoke in his verse the jargon of the *galloises* of his Province. He has left a number of gay poetic works which were highly esteemed in their time, and which, the truth is, deserved that esteem, on account of the feeling which he put into them and on account of the garb in which he clad this feeling, a spirit that was a little free, but one essentially French. Under the title of *Droits Nouveaux*, he has assembled a large number of questions, which constitute a sort of code of libertinism. Following are a few of these questions and the responses.

The question was put to this jurisconsult of *causes grasses* as to whether a young wife ought to suckle her infant herself. He did not reply in his official capacity, but in his capacity as poet, connoisseur and libertine.

*Elle a le beau petit teton,
Cul troussé pour faire virade,
Le sain poignant, tendre, mignon:
Il n'est rien au monde plus sade (succulent).
S'elle est nourrisse, ell sera fade,
Avalée, pleine de lambeaux:
Faisandes deviennent bécasses,
Les oulz troussiez deviennent peaux,
Les tetons deviennent tetasses
Nourrisses aux grandes pendasses,
Gros sains ouvers remplis de laictz,
Sont pensues comme chiches-faces
Qu'on vent trous les jours au Palays.*

^{*}Translator's Note:—"Runners for the brothels and up-and-coming ninepin-players."

*Tetins rebondis, rondeletz,
Durs, piquans, gettez bien au moule,
Tendus comme un arc à jaletz.
Deviennent lasches comme soule.**

He was asked, when one had an affair with the *gorgiases* and the *sucrées*,

*Qui ne le font pour rien, sinon
Pour le denier. . . ***

whether this affair was *vendage*, or *louage*, or *prêt*, or *conduction*, or *permutation*, or *gage*. He replied: It is a true contract, based upon this axiom of the Roman law: *Facio ut des*.

*Afin que tu connes, je fais;
C'est l'intention toute pure:
Sans les dons, on n'ayme jamais.****

He was asked if a *bague* or woman of pleasure who had been deceived by a *courtière* or *maquerelle*, and who had given herself, upon this person's word, to a *putier ordinaire*, might claim damages and

**Translator's Note:—(Freely:)*

She has a very pretty teat,
And a fair and well-turned rump,
A bosom tender, soft and sweet,
And nothing is more plump.
But she will be a very frump,
If she becomes a nurse;
For pheasants make but sorry cocks,
And well-turned rumps turn—worse,
And breasts that once were firm as rocks
In nurses are but flabby blocks,
Great open wells of milk,
As pendulous as two old socks:
I think you know the ilk
Yes, breasts that once were plump and round,
Firm and of piquant mould,
Taut as a bow before rebound—
Those same breasts leave me cold.

***Translator's Note:—* Who do it for nothing, if not
For the penny . . .

****Translator's Note:—* That you may give, I will;
That is my whole intention:
For without gifts, love is nil.

interest from the one who had promised her handsome gowns, money and *parpignoles*. Coquillart condemns the *courtière* to indemnify the poor mignonne, who had trusted in his fraudulent advice, and to pay her her wages (*salairé*). Moreover, the said *courtière* convicted of a swindle, was to be for some time deprived of the profits of his odious trade.

Maitre Coquillart examined another case of pimping (*courtage*), which is also connected with the rubric, *De Dolo*, and which shows us that the *courtières* of the fifteenth century were no more human or less avaricious than those of our own time.

*Une qui sert de beaulx messaiges,
 Une courtière qui ne vit
 D'autre chose que de courtaiges,
 En contrefaisant ces messaiges;
 Une meschante deschirée
 Qui a couru bourgs es villaiges
 Et est à tous abandonnée;
 Une morfondue mal parée,
 Une meschant' bague au gibier:
 Cette vielle l'a emmendée,
 Et la vous met sur le mestier,
 Et de faict l'a appointée
 De chapperon rouge, au surplus,
 De corset de soye, de baudrier,
 De robe, que voulez-vous plus?
 Tant, que, devant, pour trois festus.
 Vous, l'eussiez eue ou pour du pain;
 Maintenant, le couple d'escuz
 Ou le noble (monnaie d'or) luy pend au sain.
 Au temps de tout son premier train,
 Elle alloit partout loing et près;
 Et maintenant c'est un gros grain,
 Et ne va que aux porches secretz;
 Toute seule, à mont et à val;
 Elle alloit, devant et après,
 Toute seule, à mont et à val;
 Maintenant, c'est un cas exprès
 Qu'il la fault conduire à cheval.*

*Quel' tromperiel propos final,
C'est deception et cautelle;
Or, l'inventeur de tout le mal
A esté ceste macquerelle.**

The very equitable Coquillart would have this *courtière* punished and pay a fine, not to the profit of the sergeant, but to that of the public, which would thus be squared in its account with the beauty in the red hat and the silk corset. Another question a good deal more delicate was put to him regarding the deceits which are practiced in love, when the wise official of Rheims was asked if an *image* (a naïve girl) might abuse the credulity of men by selling them the same object three times over:

*Quelque gros grain, faiseur de saige,
La vient ung petit manier:
Celuy-là paye l'apprentissage
Et le pucellaige premier.*

**Translator's Note:—(Very freely:)*

One who brings you pretty notes,
A courtière who but lives
By the affairs which she promotes,
In counterfeiting those same notes:
A wretch beyond recall,
Who runs about the towns and dotes
On every man and all,
A waif with no clothes at all.
Oh, she's a comely gallows bird
Whom nothing can appall;
She'll teach you tricks you've never heard
Upon the amorous stall,
With her red bonnet like a whore,
And a silk corset, on my word!
A baldrick, too—what would you more?
Her price three straws, did you implore,
Or, did you insist, a bit of bread.
Money she does adore
And when the gold crowns hang like lead
From her bosom, then all's done and said,
And she runs near and far,
And you should not be discomfited,
If she goes to doors that are not ajar;
For there is nothing her path can bar
On mountains or in the vale.
Now here's a business she must not mar,
And so, she rides a horse's tail.
In trickery she cannot fail
Or deception that is most fell;
For what is worst of woe and wail
Comes from this *macquerelle*.

*Depuis, survient quelque escollier,
Gorgias, de bonne maison,
Qui se met à en essayer,
Et est le second eschanson.
Après, survient quelque mignon
Qui paye et passe les destroitiz:
Vous semble-il que ce soit raison
Vendre une seule chose à trois?''**

Coquillart is too honest to suffer such a fraud as this with respect to the quality of the merchandise; he orders that the nymph, guilty of an amorous deception, be fustigated and beaten,

*Demy vestue et demy nue,
Pour recognoistre le délict,
Non pas au carrefour ne en rue,
Mais au quatre cornetz d'ung lict,
Les dents contremont, l'esperit
Pensant, ravy en amourette,
Et la teste au bout du chalit,
En lieu du cul d'une charette.***

The worthy Coquillart, who, in his official capacity, had frequently had to decide difficult cases, and who, for example could not have been a novice in the mysteries of the *causes grasses*, employs all the

**Translator's Note:—*

A certain lad who was sure he knew
And thought his judgment good
Paid the lady what was due
And took her maidenhood.
Then came a scholar in a hood;
A dashing, well-bred boy,
Laid eyes upon her and thought he would
A little new wine enjoy.
And then another—ship ahoy!—
Who paid and passed the strait:
Now don't you think this maiden coy
Was charging heavy freight?

***Translator's Note:—*

Half naked and half clad,
As does befit the life she's led,
Not in the street let punishment be had,
But at the four corners of a bed.
Head down, heels up, less live than dead,
There let the punishment descend;
At the bed's bottom put her head,
Instead of at a cart's tail-end.

authority of his legal science in his *Plaidoyer d'Entre la Simple et la Rusée*. "The most dominant quality of this piece," according to the Abbé Goujet (*Biblioth. Franc.*, Volume X, page 160), "is the obscenity. Two women are disputing about a lover; the advocates plead for and against; the claims of each party are set forth, detailed and proved, and these respective claims having been laid bare, it is obvious that they are not founded upon the good conduct or well regulated manners of the parties; the judge interrupts the advocates, the latter resume their plea, there is an inquiry; witnesses are heard: it is a trial in due form."

One of the advocates, Madame Simon, insists, somewhat at length, that if men, by virtue of their omnipotence, found it too easy to satisfy their desires with women, this would lead to serious inconveniences, for it would follow

*Que un meschant homme se pourroit
Rendre aux sucrées et drues,
Et ce semble qu'il ne faudroit
Qu'abatre femme emmy les rues:
Si telles manières indues
Couroyent, tout seroit aboly,
Povres filles seroyent perdues
Et le mestier trop avily:
Par quoy, il n'y auroit celuy
Qui ne gouvernast damoysselles
Et qu'il ne voulsit aujourd'huy,
Sans foncer, avoir des plus belles
Et des plus gorgaisses, s'elles
Se vouloyent abandonner. . . .**

**Translator's Note:—*

That a wicked fellow might turn
To ladies indiscreet
And might attack, when he did burn,
A woman in the street,
Such manners would not be meet;
Nay, all would be undone,
And perdition would come more fleet
To poor girls, every one;
While of men, there would be none
Without his flock of dames:
He could have them all beneath the sun
Without his usual games,
And even the fairest would lose their names,
If they cared to give themselves . . .

Among the depositions of the witnesses, we must notice in particular that an old *courtière*, who relates how the Rusée, who was in all likelihood a woman of dissolute life, was in the habit of luring the public women from their quarter, and how she would go, accompanied by the *tenceresses*, to stage a witches' sabbath (*faire le sabbat*) at the gate of her rival. Coquillart also gives us a description of the said witness:

*Dame de bonté singulière,
Valentine irrégulière,
Religieuse de Frevaulx,
Abbesse de haulte culciere,
Prieure de longue barrière,
Du diocèse de Bourdeaulx;
Aulmousnière de vieux naveaulx,
Gardianne de vieux drappeaulx,
Le dos esgu comme une hotte,
Chevauchant à quatre chevaulx
Sans estrivieres ne hourseaulx,
Et ridée comme une marmote.**

The witness, in describing this parliament of women, designates them for the most part by their names and nicknames which greatly resemble those that we have extracted from the tax-records of 1292, all of which goes to attest the persistence of the customs of Prostitution. As to this curious nomenclature, there might be found today, in the lowest ranks of lost women, many unfortunates who might answer to such a roll-call.

*C'est assavoir Margot la Gente,
Jacqueline de Carpentras,
Olive de Gaste-Fatras,
Hugueline de Cote-Crotée,*

**Translator's Note:—Most gracious she, I do opine,
An irregular valentine,
A religious of Frevaux,
Abbess of culture fine,
Prioress of long line,
Of the diocese of Bordeaux;
One of those almoners, I know,
Who sail with all the winds that blow,
With her back of funnel-shape;
Of coach and four her show,
But her legs are bare below,
And she's wrinkled like an ape.*

Marion de Traîne-Poetras,
Et Julienne l'Esgarée,
Cristine la Decoulourée,
Égyptienne la Pompeuse,
Augustine la Mauparée,
Bertheline la Rioteuse,
Sansonnette Lourd-Grimarrée,
Henriette la Marmiteuse,
Guillemette Porte-Cuirasse,
Ragonde Michelin-Becasse,
Regnaudine la Rondelette,
Laurence la Grand-Chiche-Face,
Demeurant à la Pourcelette,
Jacquette la Blanche-Fleurette,
Tiennon la Cousine-Yolant,
Edeline Pisse-Collette,
Maistresse de la Truye-Volant,
Freminete de Mal-Tallent,
Geffine Petit-Fretillon,
Rauqueline de l'Esquillon,
Josseline de Becquillon,
Et dame Bietrix, demourant
En la rue du Carrillon,
A l'ymage du Cormorant.

These various nicknames, descriptive of the defects and qualities of the women, their physiognomy or their toilet, might have furnished material for a very curious commentary which the learned Leduchat would not have left unwritten; thus, Olive de Gaste-Fatras appears to us to have been baptized with this name for the reason that she ruined the men who approached her. *Fatras* was the name then given to a bundle of keys, and in the figurative style of the good *raillards*, keys and *fatras* were scattered everywhere. Marion de Traîne-Poetras appears to owe this vile nickname to the filthiness of her chemise, like that which a comic writer of the school of Bruscambille pictures for us as "*poitrassée par devant et dorée par derrière*." For the rest, we may believe that Coquillart did not go to seek his subjects at Paris, but that he embodied in his naively smutty verses all that he had seen with his own eyes in the good city of Rheims.

He must have been an excellent official, and Jean Juvenal des Ursins, Archbishop of Rheims, does not hesitate to act as his testamentary executor, in 1472; he was, undoubtedly, a very witty and very gay poet, but his manners were very free. There are to be found in his poems many charming liberties which La Fontaine has not disdained to imitate. He was, it must be admitted, not very fastidious with regard to the morality of the company he kept. His verses familiarize us with his mode of life, and his epitaph, composed by Clément Marot, informs us that he died as he had lived.

*La morre est jeu pire qu'aux quilles,
Ne qu' aux eschecs ne qu'an quillart:
A ce meschant jeu, Coquillart
Perdit la vie et ses coquilles.**

This epitaph has assuredly been misinterpreted by the biographers who have quoted it, and who would have it that Coquillart, having lost a considerable sum at the game of *morre*, died of chagrin. Clément Marot, if not the Abbé Goujet, would have made allusion to the three *coquilles d'or* which the old Coquillart carried. It is our opinion that there is to be seen in this epitaph a succession of word plays, which the commentators of Marot have not suspected. The *morre*** is a game which goes back to the highest antiquity, where it is known as *micatio digitum*, and consists in raising as many fingers as the adversary raises with a marvelous vivacity. We may get without difficulty the indecent allusion which the poet makes by a mere comparison of *la morre* to *l'amour*, when we reflect upon the analogy between the two games. From this it follows that Coquillart had lost *la vie et ses coquilles* (another obscene allusion in playing at *l'amour*). By *coquille* was figuratively implied the organ of the woman (*ovi putamen*), and by *coquilles* the accompaniments of the masculine sex (*testiculi*). It was said proverbially of a woman: *la coquille lui démange*; and of a man; *les coquilles lui sonnent*. From these philological explanations, it is clear enough that Coquillart, from haunting the company of ladies, had contracted there a shameful malady, which made such ravages upon his person that his sexual parts were

*Translator's Note:—Worse than ninepins or than chess
Is the game of *la morre*, by far;
And at this sad game, Coquillart
Lost life and *coquilles*, my guess.

**Translator's Note:—Italian *mora*.

gangrened, and finally fell under the surgeon's bistoury. Coquillart, as a matter of fact, died about 1500, at the period when the Plague of Naples was claiming so many victims in France. This was not a very edifying death for an official, but quite a natural one for a poet, who possessed no other muses than the ladies of the *clapiers*.

CHAPTER LXI

IT IS to the works of Francois Villon that we must go to learn what sort of life it was that was led by the *mauvais garçons* and the daughters of joy of the fifteenth century. Villon, before entering the prison of the Châtelet and being sentenced to perish on the scaffold, had passed his youth in houses of debauchery, frequenting only such lewd company as he met with there. It was, as he himself confesses, gambling, *repues franches* and women which led him to crime, and which led him two or three times to be condemned along with his accomplices. He was born of a family respectable but poor by the name of *Corbueil*; but he was nicknamed *Villon*, that is to say, thief or pick-pocket, since his high deeds (*hauts faits*) as *pince* and *croc* had caused him to be known as a clever rascal among the rowdies of the good city of Paris. He took the title of "scholar" (*écolier*) and it may be judged, from his poems, that he had studied in the great schools of the rue du Fouare, before receiving his "master of arts" (*maître-ès-arts*) in those schools that taught the argot of Prostitution.

He began by thefts of little importance, such as gave him only the prospect of a good meal with his friends and mistresses; he took upon himself the task of procuring for them, without untying his purse strings, bread, meat and above all, wine, and he invented a number of clever tricks by means of which he was able to rob the shops of merchants. His first arraignment dates from the year 1456. He was then locked up in the prison of the Petit-Châtelet, and during this captivity he composed his Little Testament (*Petit Testament*), in which he takes pleasure in recalling certain memories of his debauched and indecent life. He accuses of his own faults a woman whom he loves, but whom he does not name; she was, very likely, a public woman with whom he had cohabited, and who, one winter night, had put him out of the door, insisting that he never return. Villon, finding himself without shelter, had had recourse to theft in order to avoid dying of hunger, and he had taken to wandering the streets of Paris. And yet, as he thinks with pleasure of the good times he had passed with the *villotièrre*, he leaves to her, as he tells us, his heart, "cold and dead" (*mort et transi*),

*Qui si durement m'a chassé,
Que j'en suis de joye interdit
Et de tout plaisir dechassé.**

A passage of the *Little Testament* shows us that the libertines at the University of Paris were in the habit of going to feast with their wenches, either in the cabaret of the *Abreuvoir Popin*, which was situated on the banks of the river opposite the rue Thibautodé at the place where the quai de la Mégisserie has since been constructed, or at the trou (pot house) of the *Pomme du Pin*, the exact situation of which we do not know, although this cabaret was still famous in the seventeenth century.**

Francois Villon was but twenty-six years old when he sallied forth from the Petit Châtelet to return to his villainous haunts. The bad society which he encountered was not slow in nauseating him, and although he continued to live at the expense of dissolute women, who afforded him the privileges of a lover, he was not content with the money which was to be obtained through the unworthy trade of these female companions. And so he went to commit his *villonneries* by main force on the high road, in concert with a few depraved fellows, who afterwards assisted him in dissipating the spoils in gambling and at table. In 1461, after an act of violence, which appears to have taken place in the village of Rouel, in the neighborhood of Paris, he was arrested anew at Melun, along with five of his accomplices, judged by the tribunal of the Châtelet, and condemned to be hanged on the gallows of Montfaucon. He took the thing gaily enough, for he himself composed his epitaph:

*Je suis François (dont ce ne poise)
Né de Paris auprès Pontoise.
Or d'une corde d'une toise,
Sçaura mon col que mon cul poise.****

Nevertheless, in accordance with the advice of his counsel he did not rely upon the judgment of the provost of Paris, but appealed the

*Translator's Note:—Who so cruelly has driven me away,
I am from all joy interdict,
And find no pleasure in my way.

**Translator's Note:—It was in the rue de la Juiverie, in the cité, near the Madeleine.

***Translator's Note:—I am François (who here sways).
Of Paris, near Pontoise I began my days;
And now a fathom of good rope slays,
And my neck shall know what my rump weighs.

sentence to Parliament. It was during the delays attendant upon this appeal that he put into rhyme (*en rimes*) his Great Testament (*Grand Testament*) in which he sarcastically and vividly makes us acquainted with all the dice-players and the runners of the brothels, all the shameful personnel of contemporary Prostitution. This *Great Testament*, which does not testify greatly to the repentance of its author, is, for that reason, all the more a faithful picture of the bad houses of Paris, and a scandalous record of the lives of poets, scholars, and vagabonds.

Villon commences by introducing, in his *Testament*, the beautiful Heaulmière, who in her youth had had a gilded girdle and much ill renown but who, upon becoming older, had found no better trade than that of mistress of a house. The beautiful Heaulmière (she was, perhaps, a trades-woman who sold or made *heaulmes*, or helmets in the rue de la Heaulmière) had been very beautiful, and, on this account, much courted by scholars, merchants and churchmen, who did not haggle over her good graces; but at the period when her favors were paid for so dearly, she loved a *garçon rusé*, who gave her nothing but ill treatment, and who robbed her of all she earned in the sweat of her body. From, which it may be seen, the manners of the despicable parasites of Prostitution had not changed for four centuries. Listen to the lament of beautiful Heaulmière:

*Or, ne me faisoit que rudesse
Et, par m'ame! je l'ameys bien!
Et à qui que fisse finesse,
Il ne m'aymoit que pour le myen.*

*Jà ne me sceut tant detrayner,
Fouller aux piedz, que ne l'aymasse,
Et m'eut-il faict les rains trayner,
S'il me disoit que le baisasse
Et que tous mes maux oubliasse,
Le glouton, de mal entaché,
M'embrassoit! J'en suy bien plus grasse!
Que m'en reste-t-il? Honte-et péché!**

**Translator's Note*.—He never gave me aught but blows,
And, by my soul! I loved him well!
But that's the way it always goes:
He only loved what I had to sell.

I could have fawned at his very feet,
Who loved him well, though he loved not me;

The beautiful Heaulmière, lamenting thus before a fire of hemp-stalks, might have been seen crouched upon her ankles in the company of a number of other old women who listened to her with a mocking smile. The *garçon rusé*, for whom this foolish old prostitute sighed, had been dead, she informed them, for thirty years. And yet, the commentators of our poet have been tempted to believe that it was none other than François Villon himself whom she regretted in this manner, for the reason that he had beaten and robbed her so much. She draws a gracious portrait of the woman she had once been, in sad opposition to a picture of what she now is. In the one picture she is a prostitute; in the other she is a *courtière*. We propose to place side by side these two portraits which are so different from each other.

*Qu'est devenu ce front poly,
Ces cheveux blonds, sourcilz voutliz (arqués),
Grand entre'oeil, le regard joly
Dont prenoye les plus subtilz;
Ce beau nez, ne grand ne petiz,
Ces petites jointes oreilles,
Menton fourchu, cler vistraictis (clair visage bien fait),
Et ces belles levres vermeilles?*

*Ces gentes espaulles menues,
Ces bras longs et ces mains traictisses (bien faites),
Petiz tetins, hanches charnues,
Eslevées, propres, faictisses
A tenir amoureuses lysses,
Ces larges reins, ce sadinet
Assis sur grosses fermes cuysses
Dedans son joly jardinet?*

*Le front ridé, les cheveux gris,
Les sourcilz cheuz, les yeux estainctz,
Qui faisoient regars et ris
Dont maintz marchans furent attainctz,
Nez courbé, de beaulté loingtains,*

And oh, but his words were, oh, how sweet!
What times he spoke caressingly.
And I forgot all my woes, when he,
The evil glutton, would begin;
His kisses! Ah, the memory!
And now what have I? Shame and sin!

*Oreilles pendens et moussues,
Le vis (visage) pally, mort, et destaincts,
Menton foncé, levres peaussues.*

*C'est d'humaine beauté l'yssues,
Les bras courts et les mains contraictes,
Les espaulles, toutes bossues,
Mammelles, quoy? toutes retraictes;
Telles les hanches que les tettes
Du sadient . . . Fy! Quaint des cuysse,
Cuisses ne sont plus, mais cuissettes
Grivelées comme saulcisses.**

The beautiful Heaulmière is then no longer good for anything, except to give a lesson (*bailler une leçon*) to the daughters of joy, and

**Translator's Note:—*What has become of that smooth forehead,
Of those blonde locks and that arched brow,
That pretty gaze, where has it fled,
Where are those subtle beauties now?
That handsome nose, just right I vow,
That dimpled chin and little ears, too,
That comely face light did endow
And those lips of vermilion hue?

Those gentle shoulders that were so slim,
Those long arms, and that shapely hand,
Little breasts and haunches trim:
Only a lover will understand
The price such beauties could command;
Those large loins and their treasure-trove,
Seated above a firm lowland
Within a pretty garden-cove.

Her forehead is wrinkled, her locks are gray,
Her brows are fallen, her eyes are dim,
For many merchants have had their way,
And many lovers have had their whim;
Her nose is hooked and no longer prim,
Her ears are pendulous and sleek,
Her face is as pale as death's own brim,
Her lips are skinny, her chin a beak.

This is all human beauty's end,
These shrunken arms, these withered claws,
Shoulders humped and backs that bend,
Breasts? They follow the same laws,
Haunches now are full of flaws,
And thighs that once were firmly bound
Are thighs no more but rather straws,
Like sausages all speckled round.

Cf. some of Aretino's old procuresses (the theme is a favorite one with him).

following is the doctrine which she presents to them in a ballad, and here we shall take occasion to remark that the *light* women belonged, for the most part, to trade corporations, as we have already indicated.

*Or, y pensez, belle gantière,
Qui m'escoillère souliez estre,
Et vous, Blanche la savatière,
Or, est-il temps de vous cognoistre!
Prenez à dextre et à senestre,
N'espargnez homme, je vous prie,
Car vieilles n'ont ne cours ny estre,
Ne que monnoye qu'on descrie.*

*Et vous, la gente saulcissière,
Qui de danser estes, adextre,
Guillemette la tapissière,
Ne mesprenez vers vostre maistre:
Tous vous fauldra clore fenestre,
Quand deviendrez vieille flestrie,
Plus ne servirez qu'ung viel prebstre,
Ne que monnoye qu'on descrie.*

*Jehanneton la chaperonniere,
Gardez qu'ennuy ne vous empestre;
Katherine l'esperonnière,
N'envoyez plus les hommes paistre,
Car, qui belle n'est, ne perpetre
Leur male grace, mais leur rie:
Laidde vieillesse amour ne impetre
Ne que monnoye qu'on descrie.*

*Filles, veuillez vous entremettre
D'escouter pourquoy pleure et crie?
Pour ce que je ne me puyz mettre
Ne que monnoye qu'on descrie.**

*Translator's Note:—Pretty glove maker, think well, I pray,
If you would go to school to me;
Blanche, you, who cobble shoes by day,
It is high time the light to see!
Take right and left most brazenly;
Spare no man ever, I implore,
For we old ones have no sympathy
For any sentimental whore.

This ballad shows us that Prostitution in the fifteenth century was in the habit of recruiting its forces from among the glove-makers (*gantières*), the shoemakers (*savatières*), the sausage-makers (*saucis-sières*), the tapestry makers (*tapissières*), the hood-makers (*chaperonnières*), and the spur-makers (*éperonnières*).* We shall discover still another detail which merits observation, and that is that the dissolute women were in the habit of posting themselves at their windows to attract passers-by, a practice which is still to be found in Holland, at La Hague and at Amsterdam, where one may see in the suspect streets, at the windows of the ground floor, behind transparent curtains, certain women who show themselves half naked or voluptuously clad.**

François Villon, who had in prospect the forked gallows of Mont-faucon, and who was perhaps half reformed in the hope of escaping execution, counsels his readers to learn the deceitfulness (*barat*) of public women, who have an eye only for the purse and the honor of their neighbor; for, he says,

*Car ce sont femmes diffanées !
S'elles n'ayment que pour argent,
On ne les ayme que pour l'heure :*

And gentle sausage-maker, you
Who know how to dance so very well,
And Guillemette, the rug-maker, too,
Best learn how best your wares to sell:
There's one thing that I have to tell:
When old age comes upon a whore,
None but a parson old and fell
Will give her good bright money more.

Jehanneton, I like your hood,
But I like not your slothfulness,
And, Katherine, your spurs are good,
But do not keep men in duress,
For she who is fair to their caress
Has their good grace and something more:
She's an old hag I must confess,
Who gets no money as a whore.

Daughters, would you know why I shake,
And why my tears flow evermore?
It is because I cannot make
Good money as a whore.

**Translator's Note*:—This is what the modern sociologist knows as occasional prostitution, dependent upon occupational and seasonal circumstances.

***Translator's Note*:—Holland has had for some years now a rigorous law forbidding street loitering and soliciting, along with other forms of prostitution.

*Rondement aiment toute gent,
Et rient, lorsque bourse pleure.**

The poet repents not having, rather, frequented the company of good women, who would have kept him from vice in place of causing him to fall into it, but he cannot refrain from reviewing, imaginatively and complacently, the exploits of his foolish youth; they were "infamous women" (*femmes diffamées*), that is understood, but they were so beautiful, so joyous, so well built for love! He remembers even the lessons he received from two of them, who had taught him to "speak a little poictevin," (*parler un peu le poictevin*). It is our opinion that this figurative expression, the exact sense of which it would be difficult to render, refers to the trade of the pimp (*souteneur de filles*); the poet alludes to his two instructresses by another metaphor which is more intelligible, or which at least has been explained:

*Filles sont très-belles et gentes
Demeurantes à Saint-Genou,
Près Saint-Julian des Voventes,
Marches de Bretagne ou Poictou,
Mais je ne dy proprement où.
Or, y pensez trestous les jours,
Car je ne suis mie (pas) si fou:
Je pense celer mes amours.***

In order to understand this metaphorical language, it is sufficient to compare with this passage one from the *Gargantua* of Rabelais (Book I, chapter 6), in which there is reference to an *orde vieille*, who practiced the trade of midwife: "She had come," says Maître François, "from Brisepaille near Saint-Genou." The learned Leduchat

**Translator's Note:—* For they are women of ill fame!
And if they love but for gold,
'Tis but for a round hour that one keeps
Their love, when all the tale is told,
Smiling the while his wallet weeps.

***Translator's Note:—* The girls are pretty as you could want
Who live for love at Saint-Genou,
Near Saint-Julian des Voventes,
Borders of Brittany or Poitou,
Just where, I cannot tell to you.
But be assured in all my tours,
I am a wise man—wily, too,—
And keep an eye on my amours.

attempted to make the point, in his commentary, that this was the designation given, in Languedoc and in Dauphiny, to a debauched old woman; "signifying," he says, "that she for a long time has broken with her knees the straw of her truckle-bed."

Villon has forgotten his shame; he gives free reign to his imagination, and he formulates in these terms the morality of the good liver of his time:

*Il n'est tresor que de vivre à son aise.**

He indulges in an unstinted eulogy of the women of Paris, "who have so sharp a beak" (*qui ont le bec si affilé*), and he praises their language above those of all Christendom:

*Il n'est bon bec que de Paris.***

He recognizes, also, other merits in the Parisiennes, and he cites a few of the latter, who, however, had failed to make a fortune at debauchery:

*Temoing Jacqueline et Perrette
Et Ysabeau qui dit: Enné!****

Clément Marot, in a note to his edition of Villon, assures us that the word *enné* was a woman's oath. Villon takes pity on the distress (*disette*) of these three poor girls, whom he had not been able to enrich, and who he wishes might have the crowns which fall from the tables of the Celestines and the Carthusians; but all his preferences are for "*la grosse Margot*":

*Tres douce face et pourtraicture,
Allez devote créature:
Je l'aime de propre nature,
Et elle moy, la douce sade (mignonne)!*****

*Translator's Note:—There is no wealth but to live at ease.

**Translator's Note:—"There is no good gab save at Paris," is Nicolson's translation of this line, which, as he remarks, has never been rendered satisfactorily, all translators, including Swinburne, having fallen down over it.

***Translator's Note:—Witness Jacqueline and Perette
And Ysabeau who says: *Enné!*

****Translator's Note:—She of the sweet and pretty face,
Face that I love so to be near,
I love her for her native grace,
And she loves me, the pretty dear!

It is to her that he addresses a ballad of which she is the heroine and he the hero. This ballad affords us a picturesque and cynical view of the ménage which was kept by the girls and their lovers:

*Si je ayme et sers la belle de bon haict (de bon coeur),
M'en devez-vous tenir à vil ne sot?
Elle à en soy des biens à fin souhaict!
Pour son amour, ceings bouclier et passot (dague).
Quant viennent gens, je vous happe le pot:
Au vin m'en boys, sans demener grand bruyt.
Je leur tends (présente) eau, froummage, pain et fruit;
Sil's payent bien, je leur dy que bien stat (tout est bien):
Retournez cy, quand vous serez en ruyt (rut),
En ce bourdel où tenons nostre estat.*

*Mais, tost apres, il y a grand deshait (chagrin),
Quant sans argent s'en vient coucher Margot;
Veoir ne la puis, mon cuer à mort la haït;
Sa robe prends, chapperon et surcot,
Si luy prometz qu'ils tiendront pour l'escot.
Par les costés si se prend, l'Antechrist
Crie, et jure par la mort Jesuchrist,
Que non fera . . . Lors, j'empongne ung esclat,
Desus le nez luy en fais un escript,
En ce bourdel où tenons nostre estat.*

*Puis paix se faict, et me lasche un gros pet,
Plus enflée qu'un venimeux scarbot,
Riant m'assiet le poing sur le sommet;
Gogo me dit, et me fiert le jambot.
Tous deux yvres dormons comme un sabot,
Et au resveil, quant le ventre luy bruyt,
Monte sur moy, quel' ne gaste son fruit,
Soubz elle geins, plus qu'un aiz me fait plat:
De paillader tout elle me destruit,
En ce bourdel où tenons nostre estat.*

*Vente, gresle, gelle, j'ay mon pain cuict:
Je suis paillard, la paillarde me duit:
L'ung vault l'autre, c'est à mau-chat mau-rat;
Ordure avons et ordure nous suyt,*

*Nous deffuyons honneurs, et il nous fuyt,
En ce bourdel où tenons nostre estat.**

It is impossible to paint under colors more hideous this horrible concubinage, in which the man lived by the Prostitution of the woman, a Prostitution which he aided and protected. Villon takes us with him into those infected holes where the debauchery at its filthiest gave asylum to drunkenness. The famous Macette of Regnier is not better *pourtraicte* than the Margot of Villon.

Villon had been the well-beloved (*the franc gontier*) of Margot, whom he was in the habit of beating when silver did not come into the house; but in reading his *Great Testament*, we discover at every step that Margot had many rivals of the same sort. Thus the poet, when

**Translator's Note:—*If I do love this beauty in my heart,
Should you then hold me villain or a fool?
Oh, she can teach you all the lover's art!
Then for her love gird on the warrior's tool.
If one comes in, I'll entertain the fool
And drink my wine without great bruit.
I'll give him water, cheese and bread and fruit:
If he pays well, I'll tell him at the gate,
He may return, when passion drives him to't,
To this same brothel where we keep our state.

But afterward there is great chagrin
When Margot, penniless, comes into bed;
'Tis then my heart does hate her like all sin;
Take her robe, her cloak, the very hood on her head
And pawn them, for a poor pimp must be fed.
And then she swears egad, a mighty oath,
By the Antichrist, the death of Christ, and both,
I shall not do it . . . Then, to close debate,
A blow on the nose and she's no longer loath,
In this same brothel where we keep our state.

And then peace comes, it's settled with a poop,
A venomous one, that wins from her a smile;
And then you ought to see my darling stoop
And lay her hand upon my head the while,
As many an amorous word and look beguile
Us like two drunken owls into a doze;
Then, she mounts me, though heaven surely knows
I am not used to such a luckless weight,
But that is where my health flees, honor goes
In this same brothel where we keep our state,

Wind, hail, or frost, I know I've baked my bread;
I am a villain, villain when all's said:
One's good as the other; it's an even fate.
Ordure we are and ordure we must tread;
We flee from honour, and now honour's fled,
In this same brothel where we keep our state.

he has been put into a good humor, speaks of Marion l'Ydolle and of the huge Jehanne de Bretagne, who kept "public school" (*publique école*),

Où l'escolier le maistre enseigne."*

But since it is a question of making honorable amends, he addresses himself lamentably to these *enfants perdus*, who are to be found, he tells us, in the house of Marion l'Ydolle, and he urges them to refrain from imitating him. A ballade "of good doctrine" which he offers to "those of evil life" makes us still better acquainted with these inmates of the taverns and the brothels:

*Car, or' soyes porteur de bulles,
Pipeur ou hazardeur de dez,
Tailleur de faulx coings, tu te brules
Comme ceux qui sont eschaudez (boulus);
Trahistres (traîtres) pervers, de foy vuydez,
Soyes larrons, ravis ou pillés:
Où en va l'acquest que cuydez?
Tout aux tavernes et aux filles.*

*Rime, raille, cymballe, luttés,
Hante tous autres eshontez,
Farce, broille, joue des frustes,
Faintes, jeux et moralitéz,
Faictz en villes et citéz;
Gaigne au berlan, au glic, aux quilles;
Où s'en va tout? Or, escoutez,
Tout aux tavernes et aux filles.*

*De telz ordures te reculles,
Laboure, fauche champs et préz,
Sers et pense chevaux et mulles,
S'aucunement tu n'es lettrez;*

*Assez auras, si prens en gréz;
Mais, si chanvre broyes ou tilles,
Ne metz ton labour qu'as ouvrez,
Tout aux tavernes et aux filles.*

*Translator's Note:—Where the scholar teaches the master.

*Chausses, pourpoinctz et bourreletz,
Robes, et toutes vos drapilles,
Ains que cessez, vous porterez
Tout aux tavernes et aux filles.**

This moral ballad shows us that the poets, the comedians, the jugglers, the musicians and the gamblers formed the fine flower of Prostitution. Villon was distinguished among them all by reason of his disorderly life and his amours, however poor he may have been, for he drew with both hands upon the purses of his mistresses' customers. He robs, in passing, an avaricious banker, Maître Jacques James, who never spent money except for the *truies*, and who purchased his pleasures in the cheapest possible market:

*Pour qui amasse-t-il? pour les siens;
Il ne plaint, fors que ses morceaux:*

**Translator's Note:—*

If you are a bearer of lying notes, or turn
A crafty but a dangerous trick at dice,
Or deal in false coins, beware, my lad, you'll burn
Like those who are boiled alive for their great vice:
Traitors perverse and void of all good faith,
Robbers and knaves you are, and thievish churls;
While the booty that you get is but a wraith:
It all goes to the taverns and the girls.

Then rhyme and brawl to cymbal or the lute,
And haunt the company of other fools;
Yes, go on, act the farce and play the flute,
And mimic in the moral plays of schools,
In towns and cities where you find your tools;
Then gain your share at cards or lucky hurls
At nine-pins. Where goes it? You know the rules:
It all goes to the taverns and the girls.

But if you, my friend, from filth like this recoil,
Then labor in the fields and meadows fair,
With mules and horses plowing up the soil;
And if for books and letters you do not care,
You still will have enough in the open air;
But whether you beat hemp with other churls
Or labor in the furrow—what matter, where?
It all goes to the taverns and the girls.

Doublets and hose and pads for your behind,
Your rags and tatters for some pretty curls;
No sooner through,—you are so very kind—
Than all goes to the taverns and the girls.

*Ce qui fut aux truyes, je tiens
Qu'il doit de droit estre aux pourceaulx.**

Finally, the unfortunate Villon, after having, in a bantering manner, made his last bequests, commends his soul to the prayers of all those who ought to be interested in his fate:

*A fillettes, monstrans testins
Pour avoir plus largement hostes;
A ribleurs, meneurs de hutins;
A bateleurs, traynans marmottes;
A folz et folles, sotz et sottes,
Qui s'en vont sifflant cinq et six;
A marmousetz et mariottes,
Je crie à toutes gens merciz!***

But the appeal which had retarded the execution of François Villon met with a more favorable result than the condemned man had hoped for; for he found himself included in a general amnesty which Louis XI accorded to the prisoners upon the occasion of his joyous accession. The poet thus escaped the rope and returned gaily "to the taverns and the girls" (*aux tavernes et aux filles*). He had seen from too close up what might be the consequences of a criminal prosecution to be willing to expose himself again; but he was too vicious and too hardened to keep to a respectable mode of life; he no longer robbed upon the highway, however, and he avoided any new encounters with justice.

It was at this period, undoubtedly, that he took part in those joyous *repues franches*,*** which were celebrated in rhyme by one of his

**Translator's Note:—*

For whom does he hoard up all that gold?
He thinks of naught but me and mine;
Now that which is fit for sows, I hold,
Ought to be thrown to the swine.

The pun here is upon "sow" (*truye*), which was slang for prostitute, and "swine" (*pourceau*), a pimp.

***Translator's Note:—*To young girls showing pretty teats,
To get them a few lovers more,
To rowdies who do divers feats,
To monkey-trainers with their lore,
To idiot-fools of either sex
Who with their whistling madden me,
To widows, maids and all who vex,
I cry you all mercy!

****Translator's Note:—*"Free feeds."

subjêts, and which were the direct and lineal descendants of the ancient *villonneries*. He was always concerned with getting a good meal at the expense of someone else; he was eager to procure meat, bread and wine by means of some clever trick. The poem on the *Repues franches*, which has been sometimes attributed to Villon himself, convokes the army and the rear guard of Prostitution:

*Venez aussi, toutes presteresses,
Qui savez pieca les adresses
Des prestres d'amours hault et bas:
Gardez que vous n'y faillez pas!
Venez, gorriers et gorrières,
Qui faictes si bien les manières,
Que c'est und chose terrible,
Pour bien faire tout le possible!
Toutes manières de farseurs,
Anciens et jeunes mocquers,
Venez tous, vrays maquereaulx
De tous estatiz vieulx et nouveaulx!
Venez-y toutes, maquerelles,
Qui par vos subtilles querelles
Avez tousjours en voz maisons,
Pour avoir, en toutes saisons,
Tant jours ouvriers que dimanches,
Souvent les bonnes repues franches.**

**Translator's Note:*—Then come, each charming-fair priestess,
So skilled in armorous address
With priests of love, both low and high,
See that you do not wander by!
And come, you merry lads and lasses,
Who win your stakes at many passes,
Here is something to enhance
The life you lead of fearful chance!
And all manner of farceurs, too,
Ancient and young, the motley crew,
Come all true pimps, the brave and bold
Of all estates both new and old!
And come, each old procuress-louse,
Who always have within the house
Some very good and subtle reason
For a feast in every season:
On Sundays, working days, at need,
You are always good for a free feed.

John Payne in the *Introduction* to his Villon Society translation (1892), refers to this poem as "the curious collection of anecdotes in verse known as 'Les Repues Franches' or 'Free Feeds' (of which he was the hero, *not* the author, and in which one phase of his many-sided character and career is recorded.)"

We may judge from the style of this poem alone that it is later than Villon. As to the adventures which are related in it, there is one which belongs evidently to the celebrated scholar of Paris. A number of "companions" by trade went one evening in a fine party to *faire la noce* in the country near the gallows of Montfaucon; they were well provided with victuals, they had a jug of wine, bread and a pastry "of cunning make" (*de façon subtile*), containing six capons and "*de la chair*;" they brought, "in conclusion,"

*Avec eux chascun une fille.**

Two scholars, of whom one must have been Villon himself, had conceived the idea of consuming the soup of some companions whom they had found seated at table in a *loge* or cabin,

*Esperant de faire grand' chiere
Et tastant devant et derrière
Les povres filles hault et basè.***

The two scholars had dressed themselves as devils; they had put on horrible masks and carried clubs with which they assailed the gallants, with a war cry:

*. . . Â mort à mort à mort!
Prenez a ces chesnes de fer
Ribaulx, putains, par desconfort,
Et les amenez en enfer!****

The fellows and the girls were frightened and fled, thinking they were damned, and leaving behind them their supper, which they had just begun; the two devils, taking their places at the table, ate and drank with a high courage, without the meal costing then a single penny.

This adventure is evidently the source of a similar devil story which Rabelais relates on the subject of Villon and his troupe of scholars, dis-

*With them each a girl.

**Hoping to make great cheer
In tasting, front and rear,
The poor girls high and low.

***. . . To death! To death! To death!
Take them with iron chains fell,
Ribalds and whores, all out of breath,
And lead them away to hell!

guised as devils, who go about playing in the farces, the mysteries and the moralities.* The nomadic actors who took part in these dramatic compositions, were all of them arrant libertines, although they frequently performed moral and religious pieces; but they preferred to play the farces and the *soties*, which did not demand so great an outlay of scenery and costumes as did the mysteries. This species of popular comedy was, moreover, better suited to their manners and to their character. They went thus from city to city, "*farçant et broillant*," to the applause of the coarse-minded spectators, who only wanted a laugh, and who marvelously enjoyed the spiciness of what was known as Gallic (*gaulois*) wit. These comedians, these perambulating poets, lived in a state of debauchery with debauched women, who did not perform with them upon the stage, however; for they themselves took the parts of women by making up their faces or by covering them with masks. We do not see female comedians figuring in a theatrical performance in France before the end of the sixteenth century. The good public, which was not scandalized in listening to the most obscene pleasantries, would not have endured those pleasantries in the mouth of a woman. It is certain, always, that the comic troupes composed of poets, scholars, procurators' clerks and young adventurers of every sort, had manners so relaxed that the civil and judicial authorities frequently had to order them to disperse, and would restrain them from running about the country giving performances, which were never unaccompanied by scandal. The companies of la Basoche, la Mère-Sothe, of the Prince des Sots, of the Empire d'Orléans, of the Enfants Sans-souci, etc., were undoubtedly associations of debauchees, rather than theatrical troupes. The income from the performances (*jeux*) served, according to the expression of the time, to "furnish" (*garnir*) the bed and board of gamblers (*joueurs*). At the end of the fifteenth century, the profane poets were in the habit of going to serve their apprenticeship in these joyous bands, where each one forgot his true name and assumed a nickname and a descriptive epithet (*devise*). Jean Bouchet was called the *Traverseur des Voyes Périlleuses* (one who follows perilous paths);** François Habert was called the *Banny de Liesse* (the merry outlaw); Pierre Gringoire was called *Mèresotte* (foolish mother), etc. Clément Marot, who was author

*Translator's Note:—See Rabelais' Fourth Book, Chapter XIII.

**Translator's Note:—Bouchet was a friend of Rabelais'; there was an exchange of verse-epistles between them.

of and actor in the farces in which the troupe of Enfants Sans-souci played, took it upon himself to defend in verse his comrades in pleasure, against the envious ones who had accused them of leading a scandalous life, and who had provoked their expulsion from Paris about the year 1512.

*Qui sont ceux-là, qui ont si grand' envie
Dedans leur cueur, et triste marrisson
Dont, ce pendant que nous sommes en vie,
De maistre Ennuy n'escoutons la leçon?
Ils ont grand tort, veu qu'en bonne facon
Nous consommons nostre fluerissant aage.
Sauter, danser, chanter à l'avantage,
Faux envieux, est-ce chose qui blesse?
Nenny, pour vray, mais toute gentillesse
Et gay vouloir qui nous tient en ses lacqs:
Ne blasmez point doncques nostre jeunesse,
Car noble coeur ne cherche que soulas.**

Clément Marot had too much interest in concealing the truth not to cast the mantle of respectability over the debauchery of the Enfants Sans-souci. If we are to believe him, his companions had nothing but the peccadilloes of youth with which to reproach themselves:

*Bon cueur, bon corps, bonne physionomie;
Boire matin, fuïr noise et tancon;
Dessus le soir, pour l'amour de s'amie,
Devant son huis la petite chanson;
Trencher du brave et du mauvais garson,
Aller de nuict sans faire aucun outrage,
Se retirer, voilà le tripotage;*

**Translator's Note:—*

Pray, who are those who are with envy eaten,
And are chagrined in heart, most sorrowfully,
Because in life our path is not well beaten,
And we have not learned the lesson of Ennui?
Oh, they are wrong; we do but joyfully
Here pluck the flower of our verdant youth,
In song and dance and merry gambols, sooth,
Is it not envy that pricks them to pain?
'Tis but from gentleness and gay good will we're fain
To wander in these very pleasant ways:
Then do not blame our years, but know the truth:
A noble heart seeks solace for its days.

*Le lendemain, recommencer la presse:
Conclusion, nous demandons liesse,
De la tenir jamais ne fusmes las:
Et maintenons que cela est noblesse,
Car noble cœur ne cherche que soulas.**

This *soulas*, of which Clément Marot gives us so edifying a eulogy, had a direct connection with Prostitution, and the works of this poet, whom Calvin was yet able to convert at the time of the Reformation, are filled with licentious reminiscences of what he calls his "verdant youth" (*verde jeunesse*).

Such was, moreover, the ordinary life of scholars who followed the courts until they reached the age of maturity, and who found only too many occasions for debauchery, at Paris and in the other university cities. Thus, Clément Marot is but nineteen years old when we find him already uttering a hyperbolic judgment concerning the women of the capital (*Dialogue de Deux Amoureux*):

*Quand les petites villotières
Trouvent quelque hardy amant
Qui vueille mettre un dyamant
Devant leurs yeux rians et vers (chatoyants),
Coac! elles tombent à l'envers.***

A contemporary of Marot, Pierre Faifeu, who was a scholar of Angers, and whose *Légende* in rhymed verse Charles Bordigné brought together about 1531, won for himself a renown almost equal to that of Villon by his *gestes et dits joyeux*. But his biographer, being a priest,

**Translator's Note:*—Good body, heart and physiognomy;
To drink at dawn, flee noise and brawling wrong;
And then, when evening brings its witchery,
Before my lady's door a bit of song;
A lad who o'er the trencher lingers long
And then goes home, not wakening the town,
That is the way with lads of true renown;
And on the morrow, back to the battle's press,
For all we ask of life is joyfulness,
And may we never wander from her ways;
For know, my friend, wherein lies nobleness:
A noble heart seeks solace for its days.

***Translator's Note:*—When the little city maids
Find a lover bold,
Flashing a diamond, I am told,
Before the eyes of the merry dears,
Heigh-ho! they fall on their rears.

had to pass over in silence the more indecent quips and the most brazen remarks of this scholar of Angers, whom he compared with the celebrated Scholar of Paris. We do not find, therefore, in this naïve *légende*, as we might expect, a picture of student Prostitution; but it is permissible to suppose, from two or three passages, that Pierre Faifeu kept the same company as François Villon, and devoted "to the taverns and to the girls" all the money he could filch from his neighbor.

This is how he took vengeance one day on a devout old lady named Macée, whom he describes with the epithet of *lorpidum* (in Rabelais, *lourpidon*, a sorceress). This old lady had involved him in trouble with his mother, by reporting to the latter the follies (*folies*) of which public rumor accused the mischievous scholar. While the old lady was saying her malicious rosary to the detriment of Pierre Faifeu, this knavish young gentleman adroitly stole from her girdle the key to her house, and went to seek a girl with whom he was on good terms, and shut her up all alone in the old lady's bedroom; then, having restored the key to the place from which he had taken it, he proceeded to arouse the people of the quarter, by telling them that la Macée was keeping a *putain* locked up in her house.

Pour la livrer à qui elle l'a promise

*Pour son plaisir, comme vraie macquerelle.**

The crowd surrounds the house and cries out against the devout Macée. Then, Faifeu runs to his mother's house and tells her, feigning indignation:

Vous avez tort de croire à ceste vieille!

Qu'il ne soit vray, ma teste soit haschée,

Si maintenant chez elle n'est cachée

Quelque putain, qu'elle garde a quelqu' moine!

Je vous supply si vous n'avez essoine,

*Allez-y voir!***

**Translator's Note:—*

To give her to the one she's promised

The maid for his pleasure, like a true macquerelle.

***Translator's Note:—*

You do a wrong to credit this old hag!

If I speak false, my head shall pay,

If she does not have, hidden away,

Some whore she's keeping for some friar,

If you think I am a liar,

Come see!

The mother goes to see: the old woman herself takes her, but the latter believes she is the victim of a diabolic illusion, and does nothing but cross herself in the midst of the whoops and insults which pursue her, until she sees, upon opening her door, a prostitute *atournée*, that is to say, clad in the attire and the insignia of Prostitution.

CHAPTER LXII

IF EROTIC philology might find a place in a general history of Prostitution, we would devote to it a number of very new and very interesting chapters; for there exists as yet no special work containing a fundamental study of the origins of the language, or rather of the jargon, of the bad houses. This language which might be termed technical, is barely indicated in a few of the older French dictionaries, whereas a majority of the Greek and Latin glossaries accord it a large place, and mingle it, so to speak, without any scruple, with the language of oratory and of literature. Nothing would be easier, then, than to extract from the glossaries devoted to the ancient and classical languages everything which concerns ancient Prostitution, and the learned P. Pierhugues has not gone to much expense of erudition in compiling his *Glossarium Eroticum Linguae Latinae*, the most curious articles in which have come out of the note book of an excellent philologist, the Baron de Schonen, whose fine works on the Greeks erotics have placed him in the first rank of modern scholars. But everything is yet to do in coming at a knowledge of the old erotic French tongue; the materials are innumerable, and yet, they have never been collected and put into the form of a work of scholarship. If, as Boileau says,

Le latin dans les mots brave l'honnêteté,

(the Latin is not afraid of verbal indecency), the French is more modest, or at least, more timid and crafty. This erotic language, so rich and frequently so ingenious, it must be recognized, delights only in bits of gay facetiousness, in libertine ballads, in smutty poems, in joyous *contes*, and in ordure-laden *chansons*. It is, moreover, disinherited by the language properly so-called, and has been absolutely banished from vocabularies, into which it only creeps occasionally under a convenient disguise; but this tongue still exists with its original genius, and is perpetuated from mouth to mouth by tradition, keeping its own archaisms, its metaphors, its images, its proverbs, even its onomatopoeias. This obscene language might be compared to the argot of thieves and the lower classes. It has its reason for being, and although it finds no echo in the language of respectable

folk, although it is outlawed by grammar, and although it does not teach the humanities, it is eternally vivacious and never grows old, for the reason that its inspiration never changes, and it never has to seek a new subject.

One might easily prove, in a philologic study of the jargon of Prostitution, that this jargon is contemporary with the vulgar tongue, and that it has been formed by a confused mixture of all idioms and dialects, as though it purported to be a universal language. There are, as a matter of fact, in this strange jargon, born of whim and occasion, a multitude of words which have not left behind them their national character, and which have become French, while remaining Greek, Latin, Italian, German or Spanish. It would seem as though Prostitution, which was always, by its nature, vagabond and roaming, had established among its subjects of both sexes a conventional language, one spoken and understood equally in various provinces of France, at a period when neighboring cities were frequently strangers to each other on account of their patois.

An old French raconteur has freely parodied the story reported by Herodotus, which attributes to Psammeticus, King of Egypt, a bizarre device for discovering that primitive language which was the mother of all others. According to our author, the question had arisen as to what was the first word of the French language, and the academies had declared themselves incompetent in the face of this thorny question. The master of arts who had taken up the solution of this difficult problem, conceived the idea, one day when he was at leisure, of going to consult upon this point a *light woman*, reflecting, as he did, that fools frequently possess an innate and hidden wisdom. "Have you ever had an affair with mutes?" he demanded of her in doctoral fashion. . . . "As with others," she replied. . . . "Well, then, upon my life, have you never drawn from them one single Christian word?" . . . "Yes, indeed," she replied, "they know how to say *hic* and *hoc*." . . . "Those are Latin words, it seems to me." . . . "Not at all, my dear sir; they are *this* and *that*." This facetious story deserves to be quoted in support of the venerable antiquity of the erotic jargon.

The work which treats of this mysterious jargon with the greatest etymologic detail is the commentary of Jacob Leduchat on the *Gargantua* and the *Pantagruel*. The respectable Leduchat, although a Protestant, was a philologist who did not scruple to call things by

their right names, and who in a matter of erudition found nothing too crude or too nude. We shall, then, send our readers to this celebrated commentary, which another philologist, Éloi Johanneau, has brought to completion in the same style, improving upon the quintessential obscenities of Rabelais. There is a third commentator of Rabelais who has devoted his attention more particularly to studying the erotic tongue in his favorite author; it is the very learned and quite pantagruelic Abbot of Aulnaye, who, at the age of eighty years or thereabouts, has published a good edition of Rabelais (Paris, Desoer, 1820, 3 volumes in-12; a new edition with considerable additions by Louis Janet, Paris, 1823, 3 volumes in-8.) Under the title of *Erotica Verba*, he has inserted in the third volume of this edition a little glossary of which Rabelais is not the only source, and which is a little lacking when it comes to developing the explanation of the terms. The audacious Abbot no doubt recoiled before the perils of his material, although he has defaced his pornologic essay with the following distich of Tabourot, who had taken as his motto: *A tous accords*, and who was so keenly attuned to the spirit of old French gayety:

*Putidulum scriptoris opus ne despice, namque
Si lasciva legis, ingeniosa leges.**

This glossary simply records, in alphabetic order, the locutions, most of which are very ancient, without adding any etymologic or historic commentary which might explain them. The *Dictionnaire Comique* of Leroux, which has been reprinted three or four times in the course of the last century, offers without doubt a nomenclature that is a good deal less complete than that of the *Erotica Verba* of Stanislas de l'Aulnaye, but in it, each word is followed with some quotation which tends to fix the sense. This Comic Dictionary, unfortunately, is lacking in critical erudition and the compiler, who was far from being familiar with the best sources of the old tongue, made no scruple in rendering his subject still more scabrous by definitions which frequently surpass the indecency of the words themselves.

We shall not approach, even with reserve, a subject which offers such difficulties, but shall limit ourselves to remarking that the erotic French tongue, which is very clearly marked from the time of the thirteenth century, and which is greatly given to pleonasm and to

**Translator's Note*:—"Do not despise an author's 'disgusting' work; for when you are reading lascivious (passages), you are reading ingenious (ones)."

redundancy, translates for its own use words from foreign languages, or appropriates them as they stand with their native consonance, seeking metaphorical images, reveling in equivocations, and incessantly relieving the monotony of ordinary discourse by means of the most singular philologic combinations. It might be said that all the words, all the phrases of the general language, could be at need applied to this particular language, which in this manner enriched itself at the expense of all technology. The erotic tongue, as the Abbot of Aulnaye observes, is, undoubtedly, one of the richest of all the technical dialects. Thus, in the sixteenth century, for example, there were not less than three hundred words or periphrases for expressing the venereal act (*acte vénérien*: see this word in the *Erotica Verba*). As to the genital parts of the man and the woman, they were represented by four hundred different names, distinguished by their picturesque variety and their singular attributes.

But there is one chapter in the erotic language which belongs essentially to a history of Prostitution; that is the one with regard to the popular terms by which women of evil life were known, at certain periods and under certain circumstances, the ignoble or infamous soubriquets conferred upon these shameful creatures and the synonyms, more or less veiled, which had been invented to describe the houses of debauchery under their various aspects. We have already explained, etymologically, the ordinary names of the public women, of their procurers, their lovers and their dwellings in the thirteenth century. This special nomenclature did not remain stationary, however, but was later augmented by the impure imaginations of poets and raconteurs. That was how, in the sixteenth century, the French language came to be over-laden with erotic excrescences, resembling those warts produced by the Plague of Naples.

It will be sufficient to cite here the long enumeration of public women (*filles publiques*) given by the Abbot of Aulnaye in his glossary. We shall reproduce below a few of those bizarre names which are to be gleaned from his books, in order later to interpret them and seek their true sense:

“(1) *Accrocheuses*, (2) *alicaïres*, (3) *ambubayes*, (4) *bagasses*, (5) *balances de boucher qui pèsent toutes sortes de viandes*, (6) *barathres*, (7) *bassara*, (8) *bezoches*, (9) *blanchisseuses de tuyaux de pipe*, (10) *bonsoirs*, (11) *bourbeteuses*, (12) *braydonnes*, (13) *caignardières*, (14) *cailles*, (15) *cambrouses*, (16) *cantonnières*, (17) *champisses*, (18) *clois-*

trières, (19) *coquattris*, (20) *coignées*, (21) *courieuses*, (22) *courtisanes*, (23) *demoiselles du marais*, (24) *drouïnes*, (25) *drues*, (26) *ensoignantes*, (27) *esquoceresses*, (28) *femmes de court talon*, (29) *femmes folles de leur corps*, (30) *folles d'amour*, (31) *filles de joie*, (32) *filles de jubilation*, (33) *fillettes de pis*, (34) *folles femmes*, (35) *folieuses*, (36) *galloises*, (37) *jannetons*, (38) *gast*, (39) *gaultières*, (40) *gaupes*, (41) *gondines*, (42) *godinettes*, (43) *gouges*, (44) *gouïnes*, (45) *gourgandines*, (46) *grues*, (47) *harrebanes*, (48) *hollières*, (49) *hores*, (50) *hourieuses*, (51) *hourrières*, (52) *lesbines*, (53) *lescheresses*, (54) *lévriers d'amour*, (55) *linottes coeffées*, (56) *loudières*, (57) *louves*, (58) *lyces*, (59) *mandrounos*, (60) *manefles*, (61) *maranes*, (62) *maraudes*, (63) *martingales*, (64) *maximas*, (65) *mochés*, (66) *musequines*, (67) *pannanesses*, (68) *pautonnières*, (69) *femmes de péché*, (70) *pèlerines de Vénus*, (71) *pellices*, (72) *personnières*, (73) *posoères*, (74) *postiqueuses*, (75) *presentières*, (76) *prêtresses de Vénus*, (77) *rafaitières*, (78) *femmes de mal recepte*, (79) *redresseuses*, (80) *revéleuses*, (81) *ribauldes*, (82) *ricaldes*, (83) *rigobetes*, (84) *roussecaignes*, (85) *sacs de nuit*, (86) *saffrettes*, (87) *sourdites*, (88) *scaldrines*, (89) *tendrières de bouche et de reins*, (90) *tireuses de vinaigre*, (91) *toupies*, (92) *touses*, (93) *trottières*, (94) *viagères*, (95) *femmes de vie*, (96) *villotières*, (97) *voyagères*, (98) *wauves*, (99) *usagères, etc.*"

Among these names, not all of which have passed from the written into the spoken language, or vice versa, there are to be remarked a number borrowed from Greek and Latin antiquity, and which are, as a consequence, purely literary: *Alicaires*, *alicairie*; *ambubayes*, *ambubaiæ*; *bassara* (Greek) *bassara*; *lesbines* for *lesbiennes* (the French word); *maximas*, *maximæ*; *moches*, *moechæ*; *pellices*, *pellices*; *barathres*, *barathra*. A small number of names are imitated from the Italian, from the Spanish, from the low-Breton, from the Provencal and from the langue d'oc; *bagasses*, *bagasse*; *scaldrines*, *squaldrine*; *ricaldes*, *ricalde*, *gast*, *mandrounos* and *manefles*. There are some names which, out of contempt or pleasantry, may be looked upon as suggestive of moral or physical analogies between prostitutes and various animals: *cailles*, *coquattris* (crocodiles), *levriers d'amour*, *linottes coeffées*, *louves*, *lyces* (bitches of the chase), *roussecaignes* ("red bitches" in the *langue d'oc*), *wauves* (male wolves).

Certain names contain an allusion to the wandering and vagabond life of these unfortunate creatures: *bourbeteuses*, those who splash in the mud; *champisses*, those who live in the fields; *cantonnières*, those

who are stationed at the street corner; *gaultières*, those who frequent the bushes (from *gault*, copse, wood); *hollières*, those who frequently change their places of habitation (from *holler*, to run); *postiqueuses*, those who run post haste; *maraudes*, those who go here and there; *troupies*, those who turn to the right and to the left; *trottières*, those who trot about day and night; *viagères*, those who are always on the highway; *voyagères*, those who travel.

A number of names have to do with the indecent details of the trade of public women; *bezoches* (mattocks); *drues*; *hourrières* (*piocheuses*, or diggers, who work in the vineyard with the *hourre*); *coignées*; *escoqueresses* (*ecosseuses*, or shellers); *martingales* (those who double the stakes); *hores* (those who are paid by the hour);* *pautonnières* female boatmen or ferry women); *posoères* (those who pose); *présentières* (those who present or offer); *refaitières* (those who readjust); *redresseuses*; *reveleuses* or rather *releveuses*; *touses* (those who clip); etc. The joyous life ordinarily led by prostitutes and their lovers is indicated in the multitude of names which are equivalent to "daughters of joy" (*filles de joie*): *galloises* (from *galle*, gaiety); *goudines* or *gaudines* (from *gaudere*, to rejoice); *gouïnes* from *goyr*, to enjoy); *rigobetes* (from *rigober*, to live fast, *faire la vie*), etc. The different species of public women are indicated by different names; *accrocheuses*, those who hook passers-by; *bonsoirs*, those who attract customers by saying *good evening*; *braydonnes*, those who set *lime twigs* or *brays*; *cloistrières*, those who do not come out of the clavier; *caignardières*, those who haunt the company of beggars; *courieuses* and *courtisanes*, those who dwell in the Courts of Love; *demoiselles du marais*, those who always have their feet in the mud; *drouïnes*, those who always carry their utensils with them, like the *drouineurs*, or perambulating *braziers*; *ensoignantes*, those who cure their clients; *grues*, those who wait at the corners of streets; *lescheresses*, those who follow the abominable trade of the Roman *fellatrices*; *loudières*, those whose only property is a wretched pallet; *maranes*, those who by their swarthy skin and curly hair reveal a gypsy or Moorish origin; *musequines*, those who rouge and adorn themselves; *pannanesses*, those who only adorn themselves with *panne*, or fustian; *sourdites*, those who have fallen into vice as a result of seduction; *saffrettes*, those who wear a gilded girdle and embroideries of gold or silver, called *saffre*; *villotières*, those who haunt the haystacks, called *villotes*.

*Translator's Note:—Latin *hora*. Cf. The Anglo-Saxon *hore*.

These periphrases, most of which come from some proverbial locution, say clearly enough what they are intended to say, and do not require any commentary, even when they involve a licentious word-play like *femmes de vie* and *fillettes de pis*. Certain names have been drawn from the language of the customary codes, such as *personnières*, those who share in an action, accomplices; *usagères*, lands vaguely belonging to the commune, etc. Other names have become generic on account of the women who bear them or have received them, even though these names may have been originally those of saints, disguised and corrupted, like *Janneton*, diminutive of Jeanne, and *Margot*, diminutive of Marguerite. Finally, a number of names, like *cambrouses*, *barrebanes*, etc., which have not yet been explained, would demand a long philological inquiry, which we shall not undertake here.

The Abbot of Aulnaye, in his nomenclature of the synonyms employed in the sixteenth century to describe prostitutes, has been guilty of a number of omissions, among which we shall merely mark the following: *gaures*, the sense of which is sufficiently obscure; *gorres*, sows; *fiquenelles*, from *frisque*, gallant; *images*, that is to say, painted and rouged; *poupines* and *poupinettes*, like dolls; *bringues*, by onomatopoeia, frisking or wriggling; *bagues*, in a figurative sense; *sucrées*, *paillasses* and *paillardes*, those who sleep on straw; *brimballeouses*, those who ring the bell; *seraines*, or sirens, *chouettes*, birds of night; *capres* or *chevres* (nanny-goats) on account of their lubricity; *ancelles* or servant maids; *guallefretières* that is to say, calkers of vessels; *veaultres*, from which has come *peaulx*, sailors' girls; *gallières*, those who love joy, or *galle*; *consoeurs*, or sisters by alliance; *bas culz*, etc. The *Dictionnaire Comique* of Leroux, which we have not brought into requisition, would add, perhaps, a score of low and gross names which the authors of the sixteenth century had collected from the mire of Prostitution; and which Beroalde de Verville has set like diamonds in the crown of his *Moyen de Parvenir*. As to periphrases invented to express the same object in all its phases, they are innumerable, and bear, in general, the unmistakable mintage of French wit. We shall not endeavor to add a single one to those which the Abbot of Aulnaye has taken the care to collect,—as though to give us an idea of all the others which might have been gleaned in his footsteps.

One of these periphrases, “women with the short heel” (*femmes au court talon*), would not be rendered comprehensible by the simple quotation of a proverb which has been formulated in the following couplet:

*Mais le beaulté de la court
C'est d'avoir le talonourt.**

A passage from the fifth book of Rabelais shows us what it meant *avoir le talonourt*. In speaking of the rejuvenation which the Reine de la Quinte worked upon the old woman, Rabelais observes that, after having been rejuvenated, "they had heels shorter than before, which was the reason why, whenever they met men, they were very facily subject to falling on their behinds."

Despite this multitude of nicknames of every sort, applied to women of evil life, their name par excellence was always *putain*, which was not entirely banished from respectable language until the end of the reign of Louis XIV, for it is still to be found in the comedies of Molière. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it was to be found everywhere, in the pleas of advocates, in the sermons of preachers, in books of morality, jurisprudence and history, and in works of poetry and literature. It is to be encountered, even, in the books written by women. The Abbot of Aulnaye has quoted four proverbs, containing the wisdom of nations on the subject of the *putain*, expressed with a frankness sufficiently coarse-grained.

*Amour de putain, feu d'étoupes,***

*Putain fait comme corneille:
Plus se lave, plus noire est-elle.****

*Quand maistre coud et putain file,
Petite pratique est en ville.*****

*Jamais putain n'aima preud'hom,
Ny grasse geline chapon.******

Two other proverbs relative to light women prove that the popular good sense frequently attached a moral meaning to words which

*Translator's Note:— But all beauty at the court
Lies in having a heel that's short.

**Translator's Note:— Love of a whore is fire to oakum.

***Translator's Note:— A whore is like a crow:
The more they wash the blacker they grow.

****Translator's Note:— When master doth stitch and whore doth spin,
There's a little custom the town within.

*****Translator's Note:—If whores ever loved good men,
Then a capon surely would fat a hen.

suggested an indecent thought, in order, so to speak, to place the remedy beside the evil.

*Folles femmes n'aiment que pour pasture.**

*Femme folle à la messe,
Femme molle à la fesse.***

If in this abundant nomenclature, the name *catin* does not figure, it is for the reason that it was not introduced into the erotic language until a period very near our own. *Catin* has long been employed as a diminutive of *Catherine*, a name much in use among the women of the people; this name had become synonymous with *poupée*, for the reason that it was the one given by children to their dolls; from there, the name passed naturally enough to debauched women, who did not marry, but remained virgins all their life, which was what was known as *coiffer Sainte Catherine*. From *catin* came *cataut*, and the change of termination did not tend to render this diminutive any the more respectable.

The infamous place in which Prostitution had its seat, the *bordel*, which makes its appearance in the satires of Boileau and the tales of Voltaire, does not appear to have inspired the wit of the synonym-makers. The Abbot of Aulnay reports but five or six synonyms, which were not even commonly employed in the language of the people, but which were reserved for the written tongue. He cites *eschevinage*, which appears to involve an obscene word play; *curatrie*, which awakens the idea of a *curé* or prebend; *clapoir*, which is derived from *clapier*; *putefy*, which indicates the fief of whores (*putes*); *pearultre*, one who stretches out on a ferry boat; *paillre*, which shows us that these places did not have any other beds than piles of straw and hay, etc. But the word *bordel* was always retained by preference, although the situation of the place itself and its régime had been altered completely as a result of the ordinances relative to legal Prostitution. The *bordes*, which had been the first retreats of public debauchery, did not exist any longer, except in a few cities in the provinces, at the period when the women of dissolute life had the right to keep a *bordel* (*tenir bordel*) in certain infamous streets, where they paid a tax and

*Translator's Note:— Light women love only good pasturage.

**Translator's Note:— A woman who is light at mass
Is a woman soft of ass.

lived by their trade, under the surveillance of the municipal police.

The lovers, companions and pimps (*souteneurs*) of these lost women, all those shameful parasites of Prostitution, were always branded with the generic name of *maquereaux*, but they had taken to themselves other nicknames, which sounded better to their own ears. They called themselves, and were sometimes called: *goulliards* and *gouliafres*, for the reason that they devoured the fruit of the indecent industry of their sorry companions; *chalends*, because they were inmates of the house; *paillards*, from their beds of straw; *holliers*, *mouliers* and *houlleurs*, because they ran about the country with their *coureuses*; *lescheors* and *lescheurs*, because they grew fat at the expense of the dripping-pan of the place; *maquignons* and *courratiers*, or *courtiers*, because they aided the obscene traffic of their sweethearts; *frances-gontiers*, *gastouers*, *étalons*, *casse-museaux*, *calinaires* or *calins*, *lesbins* and *lapins*, etc. The contemptible men who devoted themselves thus to this most hideous form of concubinage, and who drew from it their only revenues, were the depositaries if not the inventors of the argot of Prostitution; and in the taverns, where they passed the day in drinking, gaming, blaspheming and sleeping, they did not fail to reveal the depravation of their manners by that of their language.

As for the fallen women who took part in the secret traffic of Prostitution, they were marked out for the contempt and hatred of honest folk by the generic name of *maquerelles*. This descriptive name applied to all the circumstances of their abominable trade, and was employed indifferently in the most elevated work as in the lowest language. The court poets of the sixteenth century did not fear to employ it, in accordance with the example of jurisconsults and legalists. It would seem that this name, which was not excluded from respectable language before the seventeenth century, was formerly sufficient for all needs. Those who felt a repugnance to its use would say *courtitière* or *courratière*; the words *entremetteuse* and *appreilleuses* did not come in until later, and they smell of the academic style. Recourse was also had to periphrases, which bear witness to the intention of flattering the susceptibility of these ladies; "ambassadors of love" (*ambassadrices d'amour*); "conciliators of good will" (*conciliatrices des volontés*); "merchants of fresh flesh" (*marchandes de chair fraîche*); "sentinels of love" (*sentinelles d'amour*), etc. Those who practiced this odious and lucrative trade, and who exercised so great an influence over the manners of our ancestors, met only with maledictions

and outrages everywhere; the libertine himself, who made use of them for his pleasure, was under no illusion as to their infamy; it was not, happily, young women who conducted "the business of *maquerellage*;" it was old women.

The portrait of an old woman of this sort was composed in verse by a poet of the sixteenth century; it is a very remarkable fragment, attributed to François Rabelais, in the first complete edition of his works (Lyons, Jean Martin, 1558), and which had appeared in 1554 in a collection of poems by François Habert.* This Habert was a friend of Rabelais, and it may be supposed that he had desired to save from forgetfulness the "*Epistles to Two Old Women of Different Manners*" (*Epîtres a deux vieilles de différentes moeurs*), which Rabelais, then curate of Meudon, could not publish, and had no desire to publish under his own name. We are brought back to our subject in the poetic blazon (*blason*) of the evil old woman, whom we find, trait for trait, in the Sibyl of Panzoult, who also figures among the allegoric personages of the *Pantagruel*:

*Vieille édenté, infâme et malheureuse,
 Vieille sans grace, aux vertus rigoureuse,
 Vieille en qui gist trahison et querelle,
 Vieille truande, inique maquerelle,
 Vieille qui rendz les pucelles d'honneur,
 Femmes aussy, en crime, et déshonneur:
 Vieille qui n'eus oncq charité aulcune,
 Vieille tousjours pleine d'ire et rancune,
 Vieille de qui l'infâme et layde peau
 En puanteur passe un sale drapeau:
 Vieille laquelle on ne veid oncq bien dire
 D'homme vivant, mais tousjours en médire:
 Vieille qui n'as oncq beu vin meslé d'eau,
 Vieille qui fays de ton lict un bordeau;
 Vieille qui as la tetasse propice
 Pour en enfer d'un diable estre nourrice:
 Vieille qui as l'art magique exercé
 Plus qu'oncq ne feist et Médée et Circé . . .
 Vieille meschante exécration et infecte,
 Qui de ta voix les éléments infecte;*

*Translator's Note:—The work is not Rabelais'.

*Ne crains-tu point, vieille, que de tes faictz
 Qui devant Dieu sont sales et infaictz,
 Tu soys un jour amèrement punie?
 Penses-tu-bien demourer impune,
 Vieille mauldicte, ayant tant de pucelles
 Mises au train de folles estinncelles,
 Ayant vendu contre droict et raison
 Femmes d'honneur et de bonne maison!**

The energetic colors of this *blason* of an old woman, whom the author does not name, were certainly employed later by Mathurin Regnier, in the portrait of his Macette, who is the prototype of the hucksters (*regrattières*) of Prostitution in the time of Henri IV.

**Translator's Note:—*

Toothless old hag and infamous old wench,
 Graceless old dame, given to virtue's stench,
 Old in the treasons of hell's querulous imp,
 Filthy old bawd and brazenest she-pimp,
 Who traffics boldly in maidens' honor fair
 To make them, and grown women, debonnair,
 Without a drop of charity, I ween,
 But always full of wrath and bitter spleen,
 Old woman with by far a filthier skin
 Than the flag they use to wrap a soldier in,
 Who never once, I'll vouch for it, was heard
 To speak of any living a kindly word,
 Wine mixed with water is her daily drink,
 She finds her bed there where the brothels stink,
 Old woman with a very fitting breast
 To give a devil in hell his suckling rest,
 Who is in magic art more deeply versed
 Than Circe or Medea, that twain accursed,
 Old, execrable and infected rake,
 From her the elements infection take,
 Do you not fear old woman, when you die,
 That dread accounting when you go on high,
 And that you one day will be punished there?
 Do you think you can escape it everywhere?
 You who with all your sorry bawds and bangles
 Seduce young girls with all your silly spangles,
 Plying your trade without a rhyme or reason,
 By selling woman's honor, in and out of season!

CHAPTER LXIII

LEGAL Prostitution would seem to have acquired everything it needed for its regular development; it possessed its code, its usages, its customs, its privileges, its subjects (*suppôts*) and even its language. It lived almost on good terms, so to speak, with the ecclesiastical and civil authorities; it reigned, so to speak, in certain streets at certain hours, in accordance with certain conditions prescribed by the urban police; it formed an integral part of the organization of the body social, "those *secret parts*," according to the bizarre expression of an old author, "which modesty bids us to hide, but which cannot be cut off without slaying good manners, which are as the head and heart of a decent nation." But aside from this legal Prostitution, avowed or tolerated by the political powers, there were still to be found traces, almost effaced, it is true, and very degenerate, of Guest and Religious Prostitution, those two ancient companions of Paganism among primitive peoples.

Religious Prostitution, properly so called, existed obscurely in the traditional cult of a few saints, to whom popular superstition had assigned the obscene attributes of Pan, of Priapus and of the old Lares; but these were but rare exceptions, in connection with certain mysterious pilgrimages, made to strange chapels, which remained pagan under Christian names. These immodest reminiscences of idolatry were buried away, as it were, in the country districts; and so, no scandal was reflected upon the glorious mantle of the Catholic and Roman church. Religious Prostitution had assumed a more brazen attraction with the aid of the incessant heresies which had sprung up in the very bosom of the religion of Jesus Christ, the scattered germs of Manicheism being constantly revived. Manicheism had engendered the heresy of the Vaudois, and *la vauderie*, although extirpated by steel and fire, shot forth stunted branches here and there, which bore only impure fruit, a fruit which soon fell in the flames of the stake. It would not be without interest to seek, in the extinct cinders of these Manichean and Vaudois heresies, the vital principle of religious Prostitution.

This Prostitution had been perpetrated and enrooted in another form of heresy, which, springing from the same source, had taken on a

character wholly different from that of Manicheism, and which appeared to have developed in an opposite direction. Sorcery, in instituting the cult of demons, had not failed to make use of Prostitution as a powerful means of material action upon its execrable initiates. This infernal Prostitution, product of an unheard of depravity of the imagination, served as the invisible bond between sorceresses of all ages and all countries, and this it was which animated their infamous assemblages.

As to Guest-Prostitution, that naïve and credulous sister of Religious Prostitution, it still showed itself from time to time in the sanctuary of the domestic fireside; a disordered and super-excited imagination was, ordinarily, to blame. This was a reflection of the beliefs and mysteries of Paganism. Carnal relations between spirits and men and women passed then as an incontestable fact, and this cursed commerce, which the Church for long had looked upon as one of the gravest symptoms of demoniacal possession, opened the door to a number of secret debaucheries. The obscene superstition, relating to incubi and succubi had its origin in habits of Guest-Prostitution, and Christians of both sexes were easily persuaded that they might have lubricious relations with demons and with angels, who shared equally one sex or the other, just as the pagans had cohabited with their Lares, or at times, even, had entered into direct relations with Fauns, Satyrs, Nymphs, Naiads, and the demi-gods of the fields.

Our next task, then, is to examine Prostitution in the Middle Ages, under its three distinct aspects: in the form of heresy, in the form of sorcery; and in the superstition pertaining to *incubi* and *succubi*.

These demons, whom the Gauls called *dusiens* or *druses* (*drusii*), were still practicing their violences and their nocturnal seductions at the period when Saint Augustine recognized their existence and their evil deeds, by declaring it would have been an impudence to deny a fact so well established: *Ut hoc negare impudentiae videatur*. A number of Fathers of the Church, however, among others Saint John Chrysostom, (*Homily 22 on Genesis*), had cast a doubt upon the deeds of lust commonly attributed to the demons known as incubi and succubi. But the Hebraic texts assigned to these demons an origin contemporary to that of the first men, and the Christian church adopted the opinion of the rabbis in their interpretation of the famous chapter of *Genesis*, where we see the sons of God taking for wives the daughters of men and procreating a race of giants. The Doctors and the Coun-

cils, however, did not go so far as the Jewish interpreters, who related the legends of the demon as though the thing had taken place under their own eyes.* Thus, according to these venerable personages, "during the hundred-thirty years that Adam abstained from relations with his wife, there came to him female devils who became large with child of him, and who slept with devils, spirits, nocturnal spectres and phantoms." (*The Enchanted World*, by Balthazar Bekker, Amsterdam, 1694, four volumes in 12 mo. See volume I, p. 162). These rabbis and demonologists, once they had become engaged in establishing the genealogy of these demons of the night, did not stop short; they discovered that, if our father Adam had had an affair with a succubus, Eve had also had carnal relations with an incubus, which must thus have wrought perfidiously the multiplication of human kind!

However this may be, the existence of incubi and succubi was not doubted by anyone, and to such beings were attributed all the evil effects of the nightmare; for these inconvenient guests, who visited lads and lasses during sleep, were not always after the chastity of their victims; they sometimes came to sit upon them, breathing into their ears a thousand senseless dreams; or perhaps, they weighted the chest of the sleeper, who felt a sensation of stifling, and who would awaken, finally, filled with fright, trembling, and covered with an icy sweat in the midst of darkness. But more ordinarily, this demon, sometimes male and sometimes female, sometimes equipped, alternately or simultaneously, with the attributes of both sexes, would execute another vengeance upon the one who had been chosen for the purpose, and who had been rendered defenseless by leaden sleep. Lass or lad, the involuntary accomplice of the evil spirits' pleasures, would lose virginity and innocence without ever making the acquaintance of the invisible being whose hideous caresses were merely felt. Upon awakening, the victim could not doubt the immodest oppression to which he had been subjected, when he beheld, upon his couch, the irrefutable evidence in the form of sensual stains.

Such was the general opinion not only of the people, but also of the most enlightened and most eminent men. "Everywhere," says the pious Guibert de Nogent, in the memoirs of his life (*De Vita Sua*, Book I, Chap. 13), "one finds thousands of examples cited of demons

*Translator's Note:—Cf. Jewish cabalistic lore as revealed, for example in "*The Dybbuk*."

who make love to women and make their way into the latter's beds. If decency permitted us, we might relate many of these demoniacal amours, of which some are truly atrocious in the torments which the poor victims had to suffer, while in other cases, the demons were content with assuaging their lubricity." These demons were quite different from one another in humor and whims; some made love like true lovers, whom they endeavored to resemble in all points; others, not so great novices it may be, or more perverse at any rate, indulged in incredible excesses of debauchery; the majority were not distinguished from the commonalty of men so far as the results of their passion were concerned; but some gave evidence of their superior nature by means of prodigies of lust and incontinence.

The conduct of the victims toward these nocturnal oppressors, or *ephialtes*, was also quite different in various cases: some soon accustomed themselves to the approach of the familiar demon, and lived on good terms with him; others experienced, in the course of this damnable commerce, as much aversion for themselves as for their tyrant; nearly all kept silent as to what took place in these sacrilegious unions, which the Church, turning away its eyes in horror, branded with an anathema. "It only remains to show," remarked the reverend father Costadau, in the middle of the 17th century, "how the demons might have this carnal intercourse with men and with women; but the material is too obscene to be expressed in our language." (*Traité Histor. et Crit. Des Principaux Signes Qui Servent à Manifester les Pensées ou le Commerce des Esprits*; Lyon, Bruyset 1720, Vol. V, p. 137.) It was, thus, easier to speak of the deeds of the incubi and succubi in the Latin language.*

The writings of theologians, philosophers, physicians and demonologists of the Middle Ages are filled with circumstantial observations on the subject of the incubi and the succubi, who found many more believers before science had explained such misdemeanors in a natural fashion. Christianity had accepted, and had charged to the account of the Devil and his subjects, those detestable acts of violence and seduction which Paganism, from the most remote antiquity, had attributed to its subordinate gods and to the demons of the night. In each case, there were the same fantastic works of Prostitution; but the invisible spirits guilty of these works were not detested by the

*Translator's Note:—See Hudson's *Law of Psychic Phenomena* for an exposition of the causes, workings, etc. of such dreams. (J. U. N.'s Note.)

pagans as they were by the Christians, who were commanded by the Church to defend themselves incessantly against these snares of Hell. However, if the common opinion cast no doubt on the horrible deeds of these evil spirits against the human species during sleep, philosophy, on the other hand, had loudly denied these deeds, as soon as it had made an examination of the facts and had determined the phenomena of nightmare.

Incubus was the name given to the demon who took the form of a man in order to have relations with a woman, sleeping or waking. This word derives from the latin *incubare*, which signifies *to sleep upon someone*. The Greek name for *incubus* was *ephialtes*, a *leaping* or *insulting* (*insultor*) demon who ran over someone. In an old manuscript *Glossary*, cited by Ducange, the word *incuba* or *surgeur* is accompanied with this definition: "*Incubi vel incubones*, a manner of devils who are accustomed to deal with women." Ducange also borrows from the *Glosses* (*Glossae*) on the medical works of Alexander of Tralles, a passage which proves that scholars formerly had confused, under the term of incubus, the demon of nightmare and the suffering which it caused the sleeper; "*Incubus, est passio in quâ dormientes suffocari et ab daemonibus opprimi videntur.*" The etymology of *succubus* does not differ from that of *incubus* except in the difference of the rôle played by the demon, transformed into a woman. It is our opinion that we should read *succubare* for *cubare sub*, to be couched under someone. And yet, Ducange does not admit this word and its derivative in his *Glossary*, though the low-Latin writers might have been able to fill up this lacuna.

The succubi, it is true, are rarer than the incubi in the stories of the Middle Ages, but these latter, despite exorcisms and ecclesiastical penalties, did not leave in peace the wives and daughters of our ancestors. After having worked their miracles in the legends of saints, they are to be found displaying their infamies on the page of authentic history. Gregory of Tours relates for us the death of the Prefect of Mummolus, (Book VI), who sent obscene demons to the Gaelic ladies whom he desired to damn. The same chronicler gives us to understand that Satan himself did not disdain upon occasion to indulge in this pastime. A saintly Bishop of Auvergne, Eparchius by name, awoke one night with the idea of going to pray in his church; he arose to go there and found the basilica flooded with an infernal light and filled with demons who were committing abominations in front of the

altar; he saw, seated in the episcopal chair, Satan in the garb of a woman and presiding over these iniquitous mysteries. "Infamous courtesan!" he cried to him, "you are not content with infecting everything with your profanations; you even come to defile with your disgusting body the place consecrated to God. Leave the house of God!—" "Since you call me a courtesan," replied the Prince of demons, "I shall stretch many snares for you by inflaming you with the love of woman." Satan vanished in a cloud of smoke, but he kept his word, and caused Eparchius to experience all the tortures of carnal concupiscence. (Gregory of Tours, Book II, Chapter 21.)

An historian quite as grave as Gregory of Tours, one Guibert de Nogent, related five centuries later, and in the same good faith, the insults that his mother had had to endure on the part of incubi, who were incessantly attracted by the beauty of this holy woman. One night, during a painful insomnia, as she was bedewing her couch with her tears, "the demon, according to his custom, which is to assail hearts rent with sorrow, suddenly appeared before her sleepless eyes and oppressed her to the point of death. The poor woman could neither move, nor cry out, nor breathe, but she inwardly implored divine aid, which was not lacking to her; her good angel at the pillow of her bed, cried out in a sweet and supplicating voice: 'Saint Mary, aid us!' and then hurled himself upon the incubus to drive him away. The latter reared upon his feet and attempted to ward off this unexpected attack, but the angel turned him a backward somersault upon the floor, with such a fracas that his fall awoke the whole house. The servants came running to their mistress' bed, who, pale, trembling and half dead with fear, informed them of the danger she had faced, the marks of which she bore." (*Guibert De Vita Sua*, Book I, Chap. 13.)

The good angels were not always there to aid women in their weakness, and the Devil then had the advantage. But the Church might still reclaim the prey of Satan, as witness the memorable exorcism which is to be found in the Life of Saint Bernard, written shortly after the Saint's death. A certain woman of Nantes had relations with a demon who came to visit her every night while she was sleeping with her husband; the latter never awoke. At the end of six years of this frightful cohabitation, the sinner, who had never boasted of her sins, made a clean breast of everything to her confessor, and afterward to her husband, who abandoned her in horror. The incubus remained the sole possessor of his victim. This poor wretch knew, from the very

mouth of her abominable lover, that the illustrious St. Bernard was coming to Nantes; she awaited with impatience the arrival of the saint, and went to cast herself at his feet, beseeching him to deliver her from her diabolic obsession. St. Bernard ordered her to make the sign of the Cross as she went to bed and to place beside her in her bed a cudgel which he gave her. "If the demon comes," he said to her, "do not fear him any more; I defy him to approach you." In short, the incubus appeared as usual to usurp the rights of the husband; but he found the cudgel of St. Bernard guarding the bed of his victim. He could merely run around the bed with mad threats; an insurmountable barrier had been erected between them. The following Sunday, St. Bernard betook himself to the cathedral with the Bishop of Nantes and Chartres; an immense crowd had paid money to receive his benediction; he distributed lighted candles to all who assisted at the mass, and he related to them the story of the deplorable woman who had been devoted to the pleasures of the Devil; finally he exorcised the evil spirit and forbade him by the authority of Jesus Christ ever to torment this woman or any other again. After the exorcism, he ordered that all the candles be extinguished at once, and the power of the incubus was thus extinguished at the same time.

If St. Bernard did not doubt the reality of this execrable commerce between succubi and women, we should not be scandalized at finding St. Thomas Aquinas so occupied at length with these audacious demons, in his *Summa Theologiae* (quaestio LI, art. 3). The authority of these two great saints was quite sufficient excuse for the unfortunate ones to believe that, through no will of their own, they had become the victims of this strange form of Prostitution; unfortunately, they did not all possess a preservative talisman in the cudgel of St. Bernard. Nothing was more frequent than revelations of this sort in the tribunal of confession, and the confessor found his penitents convinced of a fact which he was engaged in combatting, only too often futilely, by means of prayers or exorcisms. Pope Innocent VIII was not any more superstitious than his contemporaries when, in an apostolic letter, he recognized in these terms the existence of incubi and succubi: "*Non sine ingenti molestiâ ad nostrum pervenit auditum complures utriusque sexus personas, propriae salutis immemores et a fide catholicâ deviantes, daemonibus incubis et succubis abuti.*" It was not only the religious confessional which unveiled the mysteries of incubism and succubism; it was, especially, those forced or voluntary con-

fessions which the Inquisition wrung from the defendants, in the innumerable sorcery trials, that fed the gallows and the pyres in all the countries of Europe.

It was of course, the imagination alone which was guilty of all those nocturnal works attributed to the Devil; but it was the belief of the ancients that the night belonged to the infernal spirits, and that the sleep of man was thus exposed to the malice of these artisans of sin. These latter were accused thus of employing dreams to tempt sleeping sinners. "Principally," says the learned Antonio de Torquemada, "the Devil tries to make the sleeper fall into the sin of lust, causing him to dream of carnal pleasures, until he is stained with pollutions, in such a manner that, while we delight in them asleep, as soon as we are awake, we perceive that they are to us the cause of mortal sin." (See the *Hexameron*, translated from the Spanish by Gabriel Chappuys; Rouen, *Roman de Beauvais*, 1610 in-16). Bayle, in his *Response aux Questions d'un Provincial*, reports on this subject the doctrine of the casuists touching those dreams which for a long time were charged to the account of the incubi and the succubi: "The most relaxed agree that we are obliged to pray to God to deliver us from impure dreams; and that, if one has done things in the course of the evening which are calculated to excite impurities in sleep, if one has no regret on the morrow at having taken pleasure in these dreams, or if one endeavors by artifice to cause them to return, in such a case one sins." (*Oeuvres de Bayle*, Vol. III, p. 563.)

It may be said, in a manner, that the incubi and succubi were born in the convents of men and women, for the ascetic life marvelously predisposes mind and body to this involuntary Prostitution, which is realized in dreams, and which mysticism looks upon as the work of nocturnal demons. "The religiously devout," says Bayle, "attribute to the malice of Satan the evil thoughts which come to them; and if they remark an unwonted keenness in their sensations, they imagine that the demon is persecuting them, that he has drawn near, that he is besieging them, and finally that he is taking possession of their bodies." The biographies of a number of these saints, who were martyrs to their own senses, inform us of the temptations they had to undergo in guarding their purity and in escaping the violence or the seductions of evil messengers. A nun of St. Ursula of the community of Vannes, named Armelle Nicolas, "a poor half-wit girl, a peasant by birth and a servant maid by condition," as her biographer describes

her, provides us with one of the last examples of this sway which the Devil was supposed to exert at once over the body and the morals of these ignorant, credulous and passionate recluses. This Armelle, who lived at the end of the 17th century, had begun by seeking exultation in the ardours of divine love, before finding herself at grips with the incubi: "It seemed to her," says the anonymous author of *École du Pur Amour de Dieu, Ouverte aux Sçavants et aux Ignorants* (page 34, new edition, Cologne, 1704, 12 mo.), "it seemed to her that she was always in the company of demons, who provoked her incessantly to give herself to them. During the five or six months that the heat of the combat lasted, it was practically impossible for her to sleep at night, on account of the frightful spectres who assumed various horrible and monstrous forms." The poor nun resisted these hideous tempters as firmly as she could, but they, in place of putting on more agreeable masks in order to win her by persuasion, became indignant at her refusal and mistreated her cruelly.

Another mystic, Angela of Foligno, whose diabolic temptations Martin del Rio has described in his *Disquisitiones Magicae* (Book II, section 24), also had an affair with gross demons, who beat her pitilessly after having inspired in her evil desires, which they merely utilized for the purpose of their own damnable sensuality. There was in all her body no part which was not bruised by the attacks of these incubi, to such an extent that she could not move or even rise from her bed. "*Non est in me membrum,*" she said, "*quod non sit percussum, tortum et poenatum a daemonibus, et semper sum infirma et semper stupefacta et plena doloribus in omnibus membris meis.*" The incubi, however, did not achieve their ends, although they did not cease to torment her day and night.

According to the best informed demonologists, a demon destined to the rôle of incubus, would take the form of a little, black and hairy man, but would still preserve some of the characteristics of giants, as a glorious reminiscence of his paternal origin. We find in the interrogatories of many of the sorcery trials evidence of these enormities, which undoubtedly only existed in the depraved imaginations of the victims.

This commerce with an incubus sometimes came to be a regular thing, and the unfortunate one who endured it against her will, or who even became accustomed to it, from a taste for debauchery, would remain thus in the power of the demon for whole years at a time. She

would end then, by bearing patiently this strange servitude, and by coming to like it. More than one possessed woman was cited, who had a love for the Devil, and who corresponded with him. Jean Wier relates that, in his day, a young nun named Gertrude, age 14 years, slept every night with Satan in person, and Satan had so won her love that she would write to him in the tenderest and most impassioned terms. In an execution of justice which took place at the abbey of Nazareth, near Cologne, where this nun was in the habit of entertaining her infernal gallant, there was discovered, on the 25th of March, 1565, in her cell, a love-letter addressed to Satan, and this letter was filled with frightful details concerning their nocturnal debaucheries.

There is a lack of agreement as to the nature of the licentious tastes which these incubi possessed, and controversial demonology found free play for its speculations on this head. The celebrated De Lancre assures us that demons did not compromise themselves with virgins; Bodin positively states the contrary; Martin del Rio assures us that the demons have a horror of sodomy and bestiality; Priéras looks upon them as the first inventors of these infamous practices. This divergence of opinion as to the degree of perversity to be attributed to the evil spirit merely indicates, more or less clearly, the depravation of the casuists who concerned themselves with these delicate questions. It is our duty regretfully to leaf through them in this chapter devoted, so to speak, to diabolic Prostitution. We shall not endeavor, however, to define the nature of the impossibility of sexual relations between a demon and a virgin. De Lancre, in his *Tableau de l'Inconstance des Mauvais Anges et Démons* (Page 218), relates that a young girl had said to him "that the Devil has not yet grown accustomed to having relations with virgins, for the reason that he cannot commit adultery with them; and so, he waits until they are married." We have here, on the part of the Devil, a refinement of malice; for he judged that it was not sufficiently great a sin to corrupt a virgin, and so preserved his strength for adultery. And yet, in other passages in his book, (pages 134, 224 and 225), De Lancre gives us to understand that the Devil had compassion on the weakness of *pucelles*, rather than on their innocence. "If I did not fear to defile your imagination," remarks the Abbé Bordeon, in the curious *Histoire des Imaginations de M. Oufle*, "I should report here what the demonographers have to relate concerning the pains which women suffer when they have relations with devils, and why they suffer these pains."

It would appear to be demonstrated, however, by the confessions of a multitude of sorceresses and possessed women who pretended to have had "carnal copulation" with the Devil from the ages of ten or twelve years, that the tempter did not always wait until his victims were in a state of marriage to approach them. The demonographers, without entering into special details regarding the defloration of virgins by incubi, indicate a number of these unfortunate ones who knew the Devil before the age of puberty. It is to be remarked always that these were, for the most part, the daughters of sorceresses, who had been devoted to the Devil and his works at birth. Jeanne Herviller of Verberie, near Compiègne, who was condemned as her mother had been before her, by a decree of the Parliament of Paris, to be burned alive, confessed that her mother had introduced her to the Devil "in the form of a great black man and clad in black, booted, spurred, with a sword at his side and a black horse at the door." Jeanne Herviller was then twelve years old, and from the day of this introduction, the "Devil slept carnally with her, in the same sort of manner as do men with their wives, except that his semen was cold. This," she said, "happened every night eight or fifteen days, even while she was lying beside her husband, without the latter's perceiving it." It is Bodin who has reported this statement in his *Démonomanie*.

Two or three others of the same sort, also collected by Bodin, would indicate that certain incubi, more expert or more depraved than the others, were jealous of the ordinary privileges of the newly married husband. In 1545, the Abbess of a monastery of Spain, Madeleine de la Croix, went to cast herself at the feet of Pope Paul III, to demand absolution, confessing that from the age of twelve years she had sacrificed her honor to an evil spirit "in the form of a black Moor," and that she had kept up these horrible relations for thirty years. "It is my opinion," adds Bodin, "that she was dedicated to Satan by her parents from her mother's belly, for she confessed that Satan had appeared to her from the age of six years, which is the age of knowledge on the part of girls, and that he had solicited her at the age of twelve, which is the age of puberty in girls." Another Spanish damsel, who had been deflowered by the Devil at the age of eighteen years, refused to repent of what she had done, and was burned in an *auto-da-fé*.

Two species of incubi were implicitly recognized, the hot and the cold. Antonio de Torquemada, after Psellus and Merula, explains in a

singular fashion the invasion of a masculine body by certain cold devils. "However great enemies of men the devils may be," he says in his *Hexameron*, "they do not enter men's bodies so much with the desire to do evil as from a desire for a revivifying warmth; for the devils are those who dwell in the deepest and coldest places, where the cold is so pure that it is exempt from humidity, and for this reason, they desire warm and humid places." However this may be, when a devil had entered a human body, or when he was merely in the offing, he would reveal his presence by the incredible warmth which he produced in all those parts which might come into contact with him. Thus, St. Angelina of Foligno, who had constantly to guard herself from solicitations by the Devil, would experience, upon his approach, such a fire in the organs of generation that she was forced to apply to these organs a hot iron in order to extinguish the conflagration which had been produced in them under the influence of this infernal lubricity. Following is the manner in which she narrates the incident: *Nam in locis verecundis est tantum ignis, quo consuevi apponere ignem materiale ad extinguendum ignem concupiscentiae.* (See *Disquis. Magicae* of Martin del Rio, Vol. II, sec. 24.)

The chief frigidity of the incubi was always felt, in one manner or another, in the act that characterized their shameful obsession. Bodin, after having mentioned the feeling of cold and horror which those possessed of the demon experienced in the midst of their hideous transports, goes on to say that "such copulations are not illusions or maladies," and he affirms that they do not differ from ordinary sexual relations, "except that the semen is cold." He gives an extract from the interrogatories, conducted in the presence of Maître Adrien de Fer, Lieutenant General of Laon, of the sorceresses of Longni, who were condemned to the flames for having had relations with incubi. Marguerite Brémont, wife of Noel de Lavaret, confessed that she had been led one evening, by her own mother, into a meadow where a company of sorceresses was gathered: "Finding in this place six devils who were of human form but very hideous to see, etc. When the dance had finished, the devils laid down with them and had relations with them; and one of the devils, who had danced with her, kissed her twice and cohabited with her for the space of more than half an hour, but his semen was very cold. Jeanne Guillemen confirms this, and says that they were a good half hour together, and that he spilled his semen, which was very cold." (See the *Démonomanie des Sorciers*, Book II, Chapter 7.)

Jean Bodin remarks a circumstance that is wholly analogous, in the trial of the sorceress of Bièvre, who was arraigned and condemned in 1556, in the *justice* of the seigneur of Boue, bailiff of Vermandois. This sorceress "confessed that Satan (whom she termed her companion) was in the habit of enjoying her company, and that she had felt that his semen was cold."

The historians and juriconsults of sorcery do not limit themselves to reporting this strange detail, but endeavor to seek the cause, and imagine that they have divined it in relying upon the authority of St. Thomas Aquinas. "Some," remarks the naïve and ferocious Bodin, "hold that those demons known as hyphialtes or succubi receive the semen of men and then make use of it in their intercourse with women as ephialtes or incubi, as Thomas Aquinas says, a thing which seems incredible." Bodin, who is astonished at nothing to be found in the most sinister arcana of demonomania, finds the explanation of this diabolic phenomena in a verse of the Bible, in the presence of which commentators have remained mute and confused: "And it may be that the passage of the Law of God which says: 'Cursed be he who gives his seed to Moloch,' may be applied to them."

This was not the only distinctive characteristic of these demons. The infectious odor which the Devil exhaled from all his members (hence a proverbial locution still in use; to stink like the Devil) was communicated almost immediately to the men and women he visited. These latter began to stink in their turn, and they were recognized by the infection of their breath. Bodin states, after Cardanus, "that the evil spirits are stinking, and the place which they inhabit is stinking, and he believes that it was for this reason that the ancients called sorceresses *foetentes*, while the Gascons called them *fetilleres*, on account of their stink, which comes, as I believe, from copulation with devils. All the demonographers are agreed as to this horrible stench, which ordinarily marked the passage of the Devil, and which came out of the mouths of those possessed of the Devil. "One may judge," says Bodin, "that women, who naturally have a sweeter breath than men, as a result of intercourse with Satan, become hideous, dreary, ugly and stinking, contrary to nature."

This was not all: this abominable commerce with incubi bore sometimes monstrous proof, and the Devil was pleased thus to introduce into the human race his own offspring. In this manner were to be explained all aberrations in the process of generation. Monsters had,

then, their reason for being. "Spranger writes that the Germans (who have more experience with the sorceresses, since these creatures have existed there from the most remote antiquity and in greater number than in other countries) hold that from such copulation there come sometimes children who are called Wechsel-Kind or changeling-children (*enfants changéz*)* who were sometimes heavier than the others, and always emaciated, and who could drain three nurses dry without becoming fat." (See the *Démonomanie des Sorciers*, Book II, Chapter 7.) Martin Luther, in his *Colloquies*, recognizes the truth of this fact, all the more disinterestedly for the reason that he himself had been accused of being one of these children of the Devil, whom the lower classes of the Ile-de-France called *champsis*, that is to say, those who have been found or conceived in the fields.

In the thirteenth century, a bishop of Troyes, named Guichard, was accused of being the son of an incubus, described as *Petun*, who, it was said, made all the imps servants to his well loved son. (See *Nouveaux Mémoires de l'Acad. des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, Volume VI, page 603.) The incubi had, then, a talent for procreating children so well formed as not to be too out of place in the world. But in general, their abortive offspring were frightful counterfeits of humanity. Bodin thus speaks of a monster of this sort who was born in 1565, in the town of Chemir, near Breslau, whose mother was a sorceress and whose father was Satan. He was "a hideous monster, without head and without feet, the mouth on the left shoulder of the color of fire, which gave forth a terrible clamor when it was washed." Bodin goes on to quote a number of diverse opinions with regard to the results of diabolic Prostitution. "The other sorceresses," he says, "beget devils in the guise of children, who have copulation with witch-nurses, and one frequently does not know what they become thereafter. But as to such copulation with demons, St. Hieronymus, St. Augustine, St. Chrysostum and St. Gregory Nazianzen hold, against Lactantius and Josephus, that nothing comes of it; but that if something does come of it, it will be a devil incarnate rather than a man."**

The vulgar, however, did not doubt that the Devil had the faculty

*Translator's Note:—Cf. Oberon's "changeling boy," *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act II., Scene 2. Cf. also the *Erlkoenig* legend (*Wer reitet so spaet durch Nacht und Wind?*), etc.

**Translator's Note:—(J. U. N.'s Note:) "There were giants in the earth in those days." *Genesis*, VI. 4.

of reproducing himself in human form; and those who had been begotten by him were succubi. It might be concluded from this that the majority of the liaisons of incubism were sterile. "The sorcerer who has copulation with the Devil as with a woman," says Bodin, "is not an incubus or an ephialtes, but a hyphialtes, or succubus." He previously relates a number of stories of succubi, vouched for by Spranger, Cardanus and Pico della Mirandola. Spranger reports that a German sorcerer "indulged in such copulation in the presence of his wife and his companions, who saw him engaged in the act without perceiving the form of the woman." Pico della Mirandola had known a sorcerer-priest who, at the age of eighty years, had had copulation "more than forty times with one disguised as a woman, who accompanied him without anyone's perceiving it, and who was called *Hermione*." Cardanus mentions another priest, aged seventy years, who had cohabited for more than fifty years with a demon "in the guise of a woman."

It is to be remarked that these incubi devoted their attention ordinarily to the youngest and most beautiful women, whom they besieged by night, while the succubi attacked by preference young and handsome lads. As to the sorcerers and sorceresses who went to seek in witches' sabbaths those detestable pleasures which the Devil never refused them in this monstrous admixture of both sexes and all ages, they were almost ugly, old and repulsive. One might, then, look upon incubism as a sort of initiation into sorcery, which trampled under foot all modesty, and which carried libertinism to the last conceivable limits. Quite often, the incubus did not meet with any compliance on the part of the one whom he desired and solicited; this was, in a manner, but the prelude to sin. The sorcerer, on the contrary, already perverted and possessed of the Devil, allowed himself to be dragged down to his own ruin, and lived by the practice of the works of darkness. It is, therefore, permissible to make a very definite distinction between incubism and sorcery, by saying that the one was the Prostitution of old women, and the other the Prostitution of the young.

Despite so many facts, so many confessions, so many declarations, and so many memorable examples, certain demonographers have denied the existence of the incubi and succubi. The learned astrologist, Agrippa, and the celebrated physician, Wier, put upon the imagination the chief blame attached to these nocturnal demons. "Those woman are melancholy," says the latter, "who think they do what

they do not do." The most enlightened physicians of the fifteenth century were already of this opinion, and yet, in the seventeenth century, while witches who confessed to having had the "carnal company" of the Devil were still being burned, the theory of incubi and succubi was being discussed in the schools and in the academies.*

The last time this bizarre thesis was debated in France, from the point of view at once of religion and of science, was in the conferences of the celebrated Bureau d'Adresse, which the physician, Théophraste Rénadot, had established at Paris as part of the Faculty of Medicine and the French Academy. These conferences, which were held once or twice a week, in the great hall of the Bureau d'Adresse, situated in the rue de la Calandre in the Cité, brought together a large audience which was very attentive in listening to the speakers who took part in the discussion. The most thorny questions were there debated, and Théophraste Rénadot with an imperturbable gravity directed the debate in person, a debate which frequently exceeded the limits of what was then called *l'honnêteté* (what we call decency); but speakers and audience meant no harm, all being eager to know and to learn. In the 128th conference, which was opened on Monday, the 9th of February, 1637, a *curieux de la nature*, as amateurs in physics and the natural sciences were then called, brought this question before the house: "Of incubi and succubi, and whether demons can produce offspring." The subject was not new, but it was piquant and singular. Four orators at once enrolled to speak on it in their turn. The first who took the floor must have been a physician, little in sympathy with the incubi and succubi, which he regarded as the effects of a malady called *ephialtes* by the Greeks and *pezard* by the vulgar, and which he defined as "an impairment of the respiration, of the voice and of movement, with oppression of body, which gives us the impression, as we sleep, of some weight on the stomach." According to this speaker, the cause of the malady "was a gross vapor, issuing principally from the rear of the brain, and preventing the movement of the animal spirit destined to the movement of the parts." He went on to bring out the point that the vulgar attribute these disorders to the Evil Spirit rather than to the "malignity of a vapor or of some gross and pituitous humor, which creates an oppression in the ventricle, the coldness and weakness of which, induced by the lack of

**Translator's Note*:—(J. U. N.'s Note:) See Huysman's *Là Bas* for a presentation of the scientific fact that incubi and succubi can be produced at will by adepts.

spirits and of warmth, holding all the parts in arrest, are the most manifest causes of this disturbance." He concludes, as a consequence, that this morbid state, in which the Devil counts for nothing at all, cannot determine generation, "which, being an effect of the natural faculty and of a vegetating soul, cannot be proper to the Devil, who is a pure spirit."

This theory of generation must have produced a lively curiosity in the assembly, which had no suspicion of the properties of the "vegetating soul" (*âme végétante*); but the second speaker, who was a scholar brought up on the Greek and Latin classics, undertook the defense of the demons, and endeavored to prove the reality of their "copulations with men, the which cannot be denied without giving the lie to an infinity of persons of all ages, sexes and conditions, who have told what has happened to them." He then cited a number of illustrious personages of antiquity and of the Middle Ages who had been begotten by the false gods or demons; he cited as true incubi the fauns, satyrs and, chief among them, Pan* called *Haza* by the Hebrews, as the chief of incubi, and *Lilith* as the chief of succubi; he cited the *Néfésoliens*, whom the Turks looked upon as being the offspring of demons, "since everything that is done naturally, such as the making of semen, can also be done by demons. Even though they may not be able to produce a proper semen, it does not follow from that that they cannot produce a perfect creature."

There were ladies present who did not lose a word of this scientific dissertation. The third speaker recognized as an incontestible fact the commerce of incubi and succubi with men; but he was disposed to believe that these evil spirits were incapable of begetting their kind, and he gave the following reasons: "For the succubus, it is certain that it cannot engender of itself, from lack of a place convenient for receiving the semen and storing its artful power, and from lack of blood for nourishing the foetus during nine months." He did not solve the question so resolutely with regard to the incubus. He recalled the three principal conditions requisite for generation: "diversity of sex, copulation of the male and the female, and the outflow of some matter which contains in itself the formative virtue of those parts from which it issues." He recognized the fact that the Devil might, at need, meet the first two conditions, "but never the last,

*Translator's Note:—Cf., here and later, Arthur Machen's treatment of Celtic legend, pagan myth and Catholic ritual.

which is a proper and viable semen, dowered with spirit and a vital warmth, without which it is unfecund and sterile. For this semen is in itself nothing, inasmuch as a vital fluid which is not produced in other than a body actually living, such as is not the case with a demon; and this semen, after it has been spilled from the vessel of nature, cannot be fecundated, from lack of those spirits which can only be preserved by an irradiation of the noble parts in the spermatic vessels."

The fourth speaker, a wise and prudent man, sought to relieve the anxiety of the audience by declaring that "there is nothing supernatural in the incubus, which is nothing but a symptom of the animal faculty, accompanied by three circumstances, namely, impeded respiration, retarded movement and a voluptuous imagination." He then went on to speak of the nightmare, which he explained in its causes and in its effects; and he terminated the discussion with a piece of advice addressed to those present, whom he urged not to sleep upon their backs,* and to guard themselves against the peril of a voluptuous imagination, "produced by an abundance or the quality of the semen, the which sending its species into the fantasy, the fantasy forms for itself an agreeable object and acts on the motive power, and this induces the expulsive faculty of the spermatic vessels." Everybody left highly satisfied with these learned investigations in the world of enchantment, a world upon which the famous Bekker had not yet shed the light of doubt and of reason. (See the *Recueil Général des Questions Traictées es Conférences du Bureau d'Adresse*, Paris, Souvron, 1656, 5 Volumes in-8.)

From the time of Théophrastus Rénadot down to our own era, theology and science continued to concern themselves with incubi and succubi, which were too deeply imbedded in popular credulity to be readily routed. The misdeeds of these subordinate demons are still, to this day, highly accredited among the inhabitants of the country districts. Voltaire mocked at them, with his inflexible good sense; but he came near being accused of a lack of respect for the Devil, by thus disputing the latter's ancient prerogatives. Prior to Voltaire, an ordinary physician to the King, M. de Saint-André, had touched on the true causes of this superstition, in his *Lettres au Sujet de la Magie, des Maléfices et des Sorciers* (Paris, J.-B. de Maudouyt, 1725, in-12),

*Translator's Note:—Cf. The phenomenon known to the modern medical man as nocturnal emissions, which may be favored by sleeping on the back.

a superstition which he endeavored to destroy: "The incubus most frequently is a chimera, which has no foundation except dream and an imagination that has suffered an injury (*imagination blessée*)* and frequently exists only in the minds of women . . . Artifice plays no less a part in the history of incubi. A woman, a girl, a devout lady of family, a debauchee who effects to appear virtuous in order to hide her crime and so passes her lover off as an incubus who is besieging her. . . . There are succubi as there are incubi, and they ordinarily have no more basis than dream, an impaired imagination, and sometimes masculine artifice. A man who has heard tell of succubi, imagines in his sleep, that he sees the most beautiful women and that he had their company. . . ."

M. de Saint-André sums up thus, with much good judgment, the circumstances surrounding the superstitions of incubi and succubi, and one cannot but praise him for having given evidence of so much wisdom at a period when the casuists and the doctors of the Sorbonne did not hesitate to recognize the generative power of the Devil. Thus, Père Costadau, who, in truth, was but a Jesuit, but very learned and a very good fellow, wrote at this same epoch, in his celebrated *Traité des Signes*: "The thing is too singular to be believed in lightly. . . . We should not believe it ourselves, if we were not convinced, on the one hand, of the power of the Devil and of his malice, and if, on the other hand, we did not find an infinite number of writers, and even writers of the first rank, popes, theologians and philosophers, who have sustained and proved the point that incubi and succubi of this sort may exist; but those folk must be very unhappy indeed who indulge in this shameful commerce, which is the most execrable that there is." (Volume V, page 182.)

The Church and Parliament had enacted laws against these unfortunate beings, in the conviction that such creatures, even in spite of themselves, were taking part in an infernal variety of Prostitution, and that it was only the flames of the pyre which could efface this horrible pollution, after penitence had failed to bring the sinner back into the path of pardon. The victims of incubism and succubism might invoke a certain indulgence, if they were able to make out a case for themselves, as having been seduced and forced; but ecclesiastical and civil jurisprudence were merciless toward another sort of diabolic Prostitution, that practiced by the sorcerers and sorceresses,

*Translator's Note:—Dream trauma. Cf. the Freudians.

who gave themselves of their own free will to Satan in person, and who indulged in all sorts of abominations in their nocturnal gatherings. Such were, in France as in all Europe, in the sixteenth and even in the seventeenth century, the shameful vestiges of Guest and Sacred Prostitution.

CHAPTER LXIV

PROSTITUTION under the guise of sorcery was not, like incubism and succubism, an accidental result of diabolic obsession; it was, rather, the ordinary result of diabolic possession; it was the normal state of men and women deliberately vowed to the Devil; it was in a manner, the result of that abominable pact which bound them with the infernal powers, which bound them to him who was known as the "Author of Sin." It is, then, certain that sorcery had two principal characteristics, one of which may have been the cause and the other the effect: in certain cases, it gratified the most infamous of human perversities; in other cases, it employed the intervention of evil spirits in supernatural and unholy works. Thus, the principle of sorcery lay in a mutual agreement between man and the Devil; the former submitted himself, body and soul, to the domination of the latter; and the latter, in return for this voluntary servitude, shared with his slave, in a manner, those occult powers which the Supreme Being had bestowed upon Satan, when He hurled the Prince of Darkness from the heavens into the abyss. There was, therefore, in sorcery a shameful species of Prostitution on the part of the being who thus sold and abandoned himself to the Devil.

It is not hard to understand what must have been the origin of sorcery, which obviously served as a pretext for all the strange disorders associated with a shameful promiscuity. Thus, the ancients had a profound contempt for sorcerers, whose secret assemblages were undoubtedly but the conventicles of an execrable debauchery. Legislators and philosophers of antiquity were all agreed upon branding and punishing magicians and their hideous companions. And yet, there was no means of knowing, except by conjecture, what took place in these nocturnal meetings; for we find in the Greek and Roman poets only pictures that have been very much toned down. There are merely, in Petronius and in Apuleius, two or three passages which permit us to suspect what the poets do not tell us; the tales which were narrated concerning these magic *spinthriae* and their voluptuous dances always found credulous believers, who meant no harm thereby. Horace positively states, in a number of places, in his Odes and Epistles, that the old sorceresses committed enormous indecencies by

the light of the moon, and that at night, in the fields and in the woods, the young lads would go to mingle with the choir of nymphs and satyrs (*nympharumque leves cum satyris chori*, I., 1). These meetings, however, were not always the same as the witches' sabbath of the Middle Ages, with its monstrous horrors, which appear to have been the invention of the Devil, and which were well calculated to attest the Devil's power.

The true witches' sabbath, however, had already found a place among the peoples of the North, whom sorcery inspired to all the most depraved distractions of the imagination. These peoples were still too near a state of simple nature not to be drawn by their brutal passions to all sorts of excesses; superstition, which came to the aid of their gross sensuality, found them always very docile subjects. The Roman emperors, in order to maintain their authority over conquered countries, endeavored to destroy magic, along with its adepts and its ineradicable practices. Gaul in particular was infested with sorcerers, and Tiberius could not succeed in purging this Roman province, except by declaring implacable warfare on the Druids and on their religion. It would not, perhaps, be out of place to remark here that those demons known as incubi, of whom St. Augustine speaks, and whom he terms *dusii* (*quos Galli dusios nuncupant*), were confused with the Druids by the old authors; and Bodin in quoting this same passage, reproduced in the *Etymologies* of Isidore of Seville, adds this observation: "All have made a mistake with respect to the word *dusios*, for the reading should be *drusios*, as though to say "devils of the forest" (*diables forestiers*), whom the Latins in the same sense termed *sylvanos*. It is altogether likely, as St. Augustine remarks, that our fathers of old called these demons and devils *drusios*, on account of the resemblance between them and the Druids, who also dwelt in woods." For the analogy of the name came rather from a similitude than from a difference between the drusii and the Druids. Christianity merely increased the rigor of persecutions directed against the accomplices of demonomania. It was under the reign of the Emperor Valens (364-378) that the burning of sorcerers probably started; but sorcery and Druidism had sunk profound roots into the manners of the Gauls, roots which could not be extirpated by iron and fire, even after centuries of bloody efforts. It is clear that Druidism and sorcery included from then on, in their customs, or at least in their ceremonies, a multitude of scandalous practices pertaining to guest and religious Prostitution.

However, there is question, in the Christian authors, of the nocturnal gatherings of sorcerers before the sixth or the seventh century. All the codes of the barbaric peoples, the Ripuarian law, the Salic law, the law of the Burgundians and that of the Germans provided a terrible penalty for sorcerers and sorceresses, or *strigae*, without, however, accusing them of diabolic Prostitution. The oldest written document which makes mention of the witches' sabbath, or of a shady congregation of women assembled for a mysterious purpose and indulging in magic incantations, is a capitulary the date of which has not been fixed in an authentic manner, and which is not, perhaps, earlier than Charlemagne. (See the collection of Baluse, *Capitularia Regum*, fragment, c. 13.) This capitulary does not even give us very explicit information as to those aerial voyages which the sorceresses were believed to make, in the company of Diana and of Herodias, mounted upon fantastic beasts, which probably conveyed them to a common rendezvous. Following is a curious passage, which would appear to belong to the canons of a council, a passage which has been subject to frequent corruptions: "*Illud etiam non est omittendum quod quaedam sceleratae mulieres, retro post Satanam conversae, daemonum illusionibus et phantasmatibus seductae, credunt et profitentur se nocturnis horis, cum Diana, dea paganorum, vel cum Herodiade et innumera multitudine mulierum, equitare super quasdam bestias, et multarum terrarum spacia intempestae noctis silentio pertransire, ejusque jussionibus velut dominae obedire, et certis noctibus ad ejus servitium evocari.*" It is easy to recognize here the departure of the sorceresses for the sabbath, but we do not witness their arrival, and we do not know what they came there to do. It is permissible to suppose that those villainous beasts whom they rode in the air were none other than demons, whom we later see serving as mounts to the sorcerers.

We cannot doubt that this was the sabbath, that is to say an illicit assemblage in which a cult was paid to a demon, and this cult must have been accompanied by indecencies, enormities and infamies such as marked the ordinary ceremonies of sorcerers; but if the thing existed, the word did not yet exist, for it is our opinion that the word *sabbath* does not date from prior to the twelfth century. This, however, has not prevented scholars from deriving this word from the name of Bacchus, for the reason that the Bacchanalia had some sort of a connection with these nocturnal orgies which were celebrated in honor of the Devil by means of dances, feasts and debaucheries; but

it is evident that this learned etymology, despite the assonance of the words *sabbat* and *Bacchus* is out of the question from the point of view of chronology. It would be best, then, to adhere to an etymology which is the most natural one: "The people who have given the name of sabbath to an assemblage of sorcerers," says Dom Calmet in his *Traité sur les Apparitions des Esprits*, "has apparently desired to compare derisively these assemblages to those of the Jews and the practices of the latter in their synagogues on the Sabbath day." All those demonographers who have been ashamed to be looked on as ignorant have been stubborn in seeing the origin of the witches' sabbath in the festivals of Bacchus. Thus, according to Leleoyer, in his book *Des Spectres* (Book IV, chapter 3), the initiates sang *Saboé* at the Bacchanalia while the sorceresses at their sabbath cried: *Har sabat! sabat!* But it is more probable that the Christians, who had no less horror for the Jews than did the sorcerers, pretended to confuse the two in the same general reprobation, by attributing to them the same cult, the same manners and the same profanities.

The oldest description of the diabolic sabbath is to be found in a letter of Pope Gregory IX, addressed collectively to the Archbishop of Mayence, the Bishop of Hildesheim and Doctor Conrad, in 1234, with the object of denouncing the initiations of certain heretics: "When they receive a novice," says Gregory IX, "and when this novice enters their assemblages for the first time, he sees a toad of enormous size, the size of a goose or larger. Some kiss it on the mouth, others on the behind. Then this novice meets a pale man with very black eyes and so thin that he is nothing but skin and bones; he kisses him and at once feels cold as ice. After this kiss, he easily forgets the Catholic faith. Finally, they make a feast together, after which a black cat descends behind a statue which is ordinarily reared in their place of assembly. The novice first kisses this cat on the behind; then he kisses the one who presides over the assemblage, and the others who are worthy of it. The imperfect ones receive only the kiss of the master, and they promise obedience; after which they put out the lights and commit among themselves all sorts of indecencies." (See the *Hist. Ecclés.* of Fleury, Volume XVII, page 53.) Here we have the witches' sabbath, which the sixteenth century has frequently described for us with such a wealth of detail. But this assemblage of heretics, although similar to those of the sorcerers, shows us Prostitution in the form of heresy rather than, as yet, in the form of sorcery.

The sabbath, properly so-called, whether or not it goes back to the most remote antiquity, was not well known until the fifteenth century, when the inquisition concerned itself with it seriously, in the course of a large number of trials, in which the poor sorcerers enumerated with a sort of pride the monstrous marvels of which they had been the witnesses and accomplices. It is from the interrogatories to which these foolish and perverse creatures were subjected that we are able to make out with certainty the fact that Prostitution had been, in a manner, a forerunner of the witches' sabbath. The majority of the historians who have collected these lamentable archives of human superstition were endowed with a robust and unshakable faith, and were only too ready to attribute to the Devil all the crimes which the latter's credulous subjects placed upon his shoulders. After having given a sample of a few of these saddening recitals, we shall remain convinced that, if the imagination had an invincible influence upon the sensations of the demonomaniacs, fraud and trickery frequently abused their moral weakness, to the profit of the lubricity of some, and at the expense of the modesty of others.

The sorceresses who desired to go to the sabbath prepared themselves for it by means of invocations, unclothed themselves entirely, greased their bodies with a certain ointment, and, at the appointed hour, at a signal agreed upon with a *ramon* or broom between their legs, would raise themselves in the air to a considerable height, after escaping from their domiciles by means of the chimneys. Ordinarily, they would meet, at the neck of the chimney, a troop of little devils whose sole business it was to transport them through space. Sometimes they crouched on the shoulders of these imps, sometimes they hung from their tails or clung to their horns.* They would arrive naked at the sabbath, all gleaming with the magic ointment, which rendered them invisible and impalpable, except for demons and sorcerers. The recipe for the ointment employed by the frequenters of the sabbath may still be found in the works on magic; but it has undoubtedly lost its virtue, for it is no longer employed. Once upon a time it was not without its use in unchaining those forces which each one had to expend in these infernal orgies.

Sorcerers and sorceresses, once anointed with their magic grease, would arrive, then, at the sabbath and return from it naked. This

*Translator's Note:—J. U. N. observes: Cf. Le Sage's *Asmodeus*, on *The Devil on Two Sticks*.

complete nudity is sufficient evidence that the sabbath was the occasion for an abominable form of Prostitution. Bodin relates a number of stories the responsibility for which must be left him, with the object of showing us how women and men went to these nocturnal assemblages. A poor man, who dwelt near Loches in Touraine, perceived that his wife was absent all night under pretext of doing her washing in the company of a neighbor woman. He suspected her of debauchery and threatened to kill her if she did not tell the truth. The woman confessed that she had gone to the sabbath, and she offered to take her husband with her. "They greased themselves, the two of them, and the Devil transported them through space, from Loches to the land of Bordeaux. The husband and wife found themselves there in so formidable a company of sorcerers and demons, that the man was afraid, made the sign of the Cross and invoked the name of God. At once everything disappeared, even the wife of this apprentice sorcerer, who found himself wholly naked, wandering through the fields until morning."

Following is another anecdote, unlikely enough: A young lady was sleeping at Lyons with her lover; the latter was not asleep. The girl arose without noise, lighted a candle, took a box of ointment and rubbed her body; after which she was "transported." The gallant arose after her, put on the same grease that he had seen his *ribaude* make use of, and pronounced the same magic words, which he had remembered. He arrived at the sabbath on the heels of the girl; but his fright was so great at sight of the devils and their hideous postures that he commended his soul to God. "All the company disappeared," says Bodin, "and he found himself alone, wholly naked, and thereupon returned to Lyons, where he brought an accusation against the sorceress, who confessed and was condemned to be burned."

And yet, the employment of an ointment on the naked body of the one who desired to be transported to the sabbath was not always indispensable, especially for the professional sorceresses, who had but to place between their legs a broom or a stick in order to be able to fly like an arrow, through the air, to the diabolic meeting place. Bodin assures us that this stick or broom was sufficient for the French sorceresses, who rode it very cleverly, "without grease and without ointment," whereas the Italian sorceresses greased themselves from head to foot before mounting the goat which carried them to the sabbath. This difference in the means of aerial transport

employed by the sorcerers explains the difference of their costumes in the old engravings representing the mysteries of the sabbath. "Some are naked; they are the ones who are anointed; others are clad; they are those, who," as De Lancre says, "go to the sabbath without being anointed nor greased with anything whatsoever, and are not constrained to pass through the throats of chimneys." The same distinction is to be noted among the sorcerers, of whom the young have no vestments, whereas the old wear long and hooded robes.

The demonologists are not agreed as to what took place at the sabbath, from which it may be concluded that most of what took place there was ridiculous, when not infamous. After having read and compared all the descriptions of the sabbath which have come down to us, we realize that this horrible promiscuity of all sexes and ages could have but one object, debauchery, and that this debauchery occurred in many fashions; in the adoration of the goat; in the sacrilegious feasts; in obscene dances; and in immodest relations with the demons. These four principal functions of the sabbath, at all times and in all countries, are clearly established by the interrogatories and inquiries in connection with sorcery trials. There is not much to be said as to what the adoration of the goat was like, and we are authorized to believe that the always detestable practices which accompanied the worship varied according to time and place; it consisted ordinarily in a sort of homage, followed by a diabolic investiture, accompanied by the payment of a symbolic revenue, the whole imitated from the usages of Feudalism. The new feudal subject of the Devil accepted him as lord and master, took the oath of vassalage, offered him a revenue or a sacrifice, and received in exchange the stigmata or the brands of Hell. This was the basis of the ceremony, which was practiced in many fashions, with a prodigious and frightful cleverness in the way of libertinism.

The Devil, who everywhere presided at the sabbath, or who was represented there by one of his lieutenants, affected, ordinarily, to take the form of a gigantic goat, black or white in color, an obscene animal, always the symbol of lubricity. This goat possessed, however, more than one distinguishing characteristic. According to some it had two horns at the front and two at the back of its head, or merely three horns, with a "sort of light" (*espèce de lumière*) in the middle horn; according to others, it bore above the tail "the face of a black man." (See the *Traité de l'Inconstance des Démon*s by De Lancre, pages 73

and 128.) The Devil took also the form of certain other animals not less lubricious than the goat. "I have seen some records at Tournelle," relates the ingenious De Lancre, "which depict the Devil at the sabbath as a great black hound, and sometimes as a great bronze bull, sleeping on the earth beside a natural bull." Sometimes, Satan or Beelzebub would come to receive the adoration of his subjects, male or female, under the form of a black bird, of the size of a goose.

But in many circumstances, the Devil took the human form, adding to it certain attributes of his infernal power; sometimes he was red, sometimes black; sometimes he had a face at the bottom of his loins; sometimes he was contented with a double face at the front and back of the head, like the pagan god Janus. In certain cases, he adopted a very strange configuration, the reason for which may be found in a passage from a treatise which we shall cite further on, without venturing to translate it: "Others say," reports De Lancre, "that at the sabbath the Devil is like the great trunk of a tree, without arms and without feet, seated in a chair, having somewhat the form of a human face, great and frightful." Finally, after having collected religiously all the opinions relative to the Devil's person, De Lancre himself sketches a portrait from the life (*d'après le vif*). "The Devil at the sabbath is seated in a black chair, with a crown of black thorns, two horns on the neck, another on the forehead, with which he lights the assembly, bristling hair, the face pale and troubled, the eyes round, great, inflamed, open and hideous, the beard of a goat, and all the rest of the body ill-formed, in the shape of a man and a goat, the hands and the feet like a human creature, save that the fingers are all of the same length, and sharply pointed at the end, equipped with nails, and the hands curved in the form of a goose quill, the tail long like that of an ass, with which he covers his shameful parts. He has a frightful and monotonous voice and preserves a great and superb gravity, along with the countenance of a melancholy and a weary person."

Such was the terrible master to whom the sorceresses and sorcerers took an oath of allegiance in the assemblages of the sabbath. "There is an infinite number of such folk who adore the goat and kiss him on the hinder parts." It was the famous sorcerer, Trois-Echelles, who made this declaration, in these very terms, to King Charles IX (See the *Démonomanie*, Book II, Chapter IV). De Lancre speaks, in a number of places, of this shameful kiss which was frequently given to the shameful parts of the Devil: "The behind of the great master,"

he says (page 76), "has a rear face, and it is the rear face which one kisses and not the behind." But according to the confession of a girl named Jeanne Hortilapits, dwelling at Sare, who was not fourteen years old when she fell into sabbatical Prostitution, "grown-ups kiss the Devil on the behind, while he, on the contrary, kisses little children on the rear." The Devil afterwards urinated in a hole, and the old sorceresses would come up and dip their cock's-plumes in the infected and burning liquid, with which they sprinkled themselves.* We have here, it is plain to be seen, an execrable parody of the ceremonies of the mass.** "Sometimes, at the sabbath," relates De Lancre again, "the Devil is adored with one's back turned toward him, with the feet turned up, having lighted a candle of very black pitch on the middle horn, one kisses him on the rear and in the front." In the trial of a number of sorceresses, who were adjudged and condemned to the flames, at Verdun in 1445, these unfortunate ones confessed that they were "the servants of all the enemies of Hell," and that they had committed "very enormous sins" (*très-énormes péchés*). Each of them had a *nom de diablerie*; "one paid homage to a master by kissing his back, another by kissing him on the rear, another by kissing him on the mouth" (See the *Histoire des Sciences dans le Pays Messin*, by Émile Begin).

In addition to the kiss, there was an offering, but the writers *ex professo* do not state exactly in what this consisted. Was it simply a small piece of money, with a fantastic image, such as are to be found in the excavations of Alsace? Was it a mysterious emblem like a serpent's egg, a branch of wood or verbena, a wolf's tooth, or some other object accredited in the works of black magic? We are not disinclined to look upon this offering as an immodest initiation, by means of which the neophyte gave herself bodily to Satan and became his feudal subject through a carnal act. It has also been supposed that the devil "delivered a little silver" (*un pou d'argent*) to those who had kissed his behind. (See the *Chroniques* of Monscrelet, edition of Paris, 1572, in-fol., Volume III, fol. 84).

Then came the diabolic stigmata. The chief of the sabbath, Satan or Beelzebub, was in the habit of branding his adorers as one brands

*Translator's Note:—J. U. N. contributes: See Stekel (*The Homosexual Neurosis*) on Coprophagia and Anal Eroticism. The persistence of this last, with pederasty, among all peoples and in all times, should be investigated by biologists.

**Translator's Note:—The black mass. See Huysmans' "*Là Bas*."

a flock of sheep. This brand was inflicted by the burning extremity of the flaming scepter which the King of Darkness bore in his hand, or with one of his horns. The sorcerers were thus branded on the lips or over the eyebrows, on the right shoulder or on the rump; the women on the rump or under the armpit, on the left eye or on the secret parts. This indelible brand was in the form of a rabbit, a toad's foot, a cat or a dog. These were various signs by which the demoniacal prostitutes were recognizable.

When the ceremony of adoration was over, with a multitude of practices as bizarre as they were revolting, a festival was celebrated by means of banquets, songs and dances, as a preparation for the works of Prostitution. According to the statements of certain sorcerers, franker than others, these feasts, served upon a cloth of gold, included, for the satisfaction of the appetite of those present, "all sorts of good viands, with bread, salt and wine." But according to the majority of eye-witnesses, these feasts consisted only of toads, the flesh of hanged men, cadavers which had been disinterred in the cemeteries, the bodies of infants which had not been baptized, dead beasts, etc., the whole without salt and without wine.* The benediction was not lacking for this repast; there was a procession about the table with lighted candles, and immodest songs were sung in honor of the demon who was king of the feast. It is, therefore, probable that these table orgies had for object the heating of the senses as a preparation for the monstrous acts of Prostitution which accompanied or completed the round of the sabbath.

This round (*ronde*) was executed in many manners, and each one who has described it has done so with new details. There can be no doubt that the principal object of the dance, if it always was a dance, was an odious superexcitation to debauchery; for this dance gave occasion to the most indecent postures, the most infamous pantomines; the majority of the dancers, male and female, were altogether nude; some *en chemise*, with a great cat attached to their behinds; nearly all of them with horned toads upon their shoulders. As they danced they cried: *Har, har, diable, diable, saute ici, saute là, joue ici, joue là* (Har, har, devil, devil, leap here, leap there, play here, play there); and all the spectators, the old necromancers, the hundred-year-old sorceresses, the venerable demons, would repeat in choir: *Sabbat, sabbat!* There were coryphees of both sexes who performed

*Translator's Note:—Cf., the witch scene in *Macbeth*.

prodigious somersaults and incredible *tours de force*, in order to inspire the lubricity of those present and to satisfy the lustful malice of Satan.

The round continued thus till the first streaks of dawn, till cock-crow; and while it lasted, to the sound of infernal instruments and voices, each couple would give themselves, in turn, with a frenzied ardor, to the most frightful Prostitution. It was then that the fifth capital crime of which sorcerers might become guilty in the sight of human and divine law was committed: carnal copulation with the Devil. (See the *Démonomanie*, Book IV, Chapter 5.) The jurisconsults of demonomania have endeavored to describe the nature of this crime from the statements of those who had committed it. Following is what Nicolas Remy (*Remigius*) belived to be an established fact on the subject of those unclean caresses which the habitués of the sabbath declared they had received from demons: *Hic igitur, sive vir incubet, sive succubet faemina, liberum in utroque naturae debet esse officium, nihilque omnino intercedere quod id vel minimum moretur atque impediât, si pudor, metus, horror, sensusque aliquis acrior ingruit; illicit ad irritum redeunt omnia e lumbis, effaeque prorsus sit natura.*" (*Demonolatriae libri tres*, Lugd., 1595, page 55.) It is evident from this that sorcerers were not less exposed than sorceresses to diabolic defilement. On the other hand, more than one theologian, more than one criminologist, has been willing to take up the defense of the demons by way of proving that the latter had a horror of sin against nature, but attempts to defend the Spirit of Evil on this point have not been very successful; for Prierias, who wrote his famous treatise *De Strigimagarum Daemonumque Mirandis* under the eyes of the Roman Inquisition, has doctorally sustained the point that sodomy was one of the prerogatives of the Devil: "*Universaliter strigimagae, quae in ejusmodi spurcitiis versantur, aliquid turpissimum (quod tamen scribam) astruunt, videlicet daemonem incubum uti membro genitali bifurcato, ut simul in utroque vase abutatur.*" (Edition of Rome, 1575, page 150.) Bayle, in order to describe these enormities produced by the unbridled imagination of the demonomaniacs, has forged a word which theologians and criminologists do not appear to have adopted: he calls sin *sur-contre-nature* (more than against nature) the alternative or simultaneous use which the hermaphroditic Devil ordinarily made of the sexes at the sabbath.

The inquisitor of Lorraine, Nicolas Rémy, curiously undertook the task of establishing the varieties of diabolic copulation; he had inter-

rogated with care the unfortunate victims of diabolic impurity, and he concluded that nothing was more painful than undergoing the caresses of the unclean spirit: *At hoc qui nobis istos concubitas, succubitusque daemonum memorant, uno ore loquentur omnes, nihil iis frigidius, ingratiusque quicquam fingi aut dici posse.* All were in agreement as to the impression of glacial horror which they had experienced in the arms of the demon: *frigido, injucundo, atque effaeto coitu.* A great number of sorceresses, as a result of this embrace, remained infirm or ill for the rest of their days. Nicolas Rémy, who was not governed by any feeling of decency in his questions, had obtained incredible confessions on the part of the *ribaudes du diable*, those poor foolish creatures whom the sabbath had early vowed to a mysterious form of Prostitution, and who no longer blushed at unveiling all the details of the frightful relations which they had had with the demons. One may discern, in a manner, the erotic physiology of Satan from the formal declarations which Nicolas Rémy received from the very mouths of the graduate sorceresses of his time, notably from Alice, from Claudine, from Nicole and from Didace, who had frequented the nocturnal assemblages in the Vosges Mountains.

The Latin alone permits us to quote this singular passage, in which the demonologist describes, with a licentious naïveté, the bitter reproaches which the majority of sorceresses address to their incubi: "*Alexia Drigaea recensuit demoni suo penem, cum surrigebat tantum semper extitisse, quanti essent subices focarii, quos tum forte praesentes digito demonstrabat; scroto, ac coleis nullis inde pendentibus. Claudia Fellaea expertam esse se saepius instarfusi in tantam castitatem turgentis, ut sine magno dolore contineri a quantumvis capace muliere non posset. Cui astipulatur et illud Nicolaeae Moreliae, conquerentis sibi, quoties a tam misero concubitu discedebat, decumbendum perinde fuisse, ac si diutina aliqua, ac vehementi exagitatione fuisset debilitata, retulit et Didatia Miremontana, se, licet virum multos jam annos passa esset, tamen tam vasto, turgidoque daemonis sui inguine extansam semper fuisse, ut substrata lintea largo cruore perfunderet. Et communis fere est omnium querela, perinvitas se a daemone suo comprimi, non prodesset tamen quod obluctantur.*" One might believe that Nicolas Rémy was endeavoring to prove that the sorceresses in their acts of diabolic Prostitution were less criminal than they were unfortunate, for they never yielded except to constraint and to obsession; they did not even seek in sin the delights which constitute its attraction; they served

passively, despite themselves, and groaning as they did so, the execrable pleasures of the demon, without the power to free themselves from this accursed and debasing servitude. The public of the Middle Ages, nevertheless, burned without pity all sorceresses convicted of having "ridden with the Devil" (*chevauché avec le diable*).

It was, then, an admitted fact that the sabbath, under pretext of sorcery and magic, opened a vague and dark domain for the worst sort of Prostitution; thus it was not only demons who paid the toll and took the odious profit; it may be supposed that very often the Devil figured in it only metaphorically, but he was always the soul and the thought. The sabbath in general, freed of its infernal and fantastic paraphernalia, became reduced to a congress of debauchery, in which incest, sodomy and bestiality found free reign: De Lancre, without any desire to mitigate the evils which he attributes to the "inconstancy of demons," is obliged himself to confess that the Devil had less part than was commonly reported in the abominations of the sabbath. "The wife," he says (page 137), "disports herself in the presence of her husband, without suspicion or jealousy; or it may be he is merely the procurer; the father deflowers his daughter without shame. The mother takes away the virginity of her son without fear; the brother his sisters, etc." It may be understood that every sorcerer was, in the eyes of the law, looked upon as incestuous from the very fact that he had assisted at the sabbath, even though he had no father or mother, no brother nor sister. The ninth crime "common to sorcerers," according to the canons of the Church, was always incest, "which is the crime," Bodin says, "of which the blaspheming sorcerers have been convicted from all antiquity, for Satan gives them to understand that there is no perfect sorcerer or enchanter who was not begotten by the father of the daughter, or by the mother of the son."

We find a circumstantial description of the sabbath, in the decree of the tribunal of Arras, in 1460, against five women and a number of men accused of *vauderie* or of sorcery. Among the condemned were to be remarked a painter, a poet and an abbot, aged seventy years, who had been, very likely, the principal actor in these unheard-of debaucheries, marked with a remnant of the Vaudois heresy. "When they wished to go to the *vauderie* (that is to say, to the sabbath), with an ointment which the Devil had provided them, they anointed a rod of wood, very small, and their palms (fingers), and their hands; then they placed this rod between their legs, and at once flew where they

desired to be, above fair cities, woods and waters, and the Devil bore them to the place where they were to hold their assembly. And in this place they found, one and another, the tables set, laden with viands; and they found there a devil in the form of a goat, of a dog, of a monkey, and sometimes of a man, and they made oblations and homages to the said devil and adored him, by giving him, most of them their souls, and most or at least something of their bodies. Then they kissed the devil in the form of a goat, in the rear, that is to say, on the behind, with burning candles in their hands. . . . After they had all drunk well and eaten, they had carnal habitation all together, and even the devil took the form of man and of woman, and had cohabitation, the man with the devil in the form of woman, and the devil in the form of man with the women. And they even committed the sin of Sodom, of *bougrerie*, and so many other crimes, so many very malodorous and enormous ones, so many as well against God as against nature, that the said inquisitor says he does not dare to name them, out of doubt that innocent ears should be advised of such villainous, enormous and cruel crimes." (*Mémoires* of Jacques Duclerq, Book IV, Chapter 4.)

Bodin, who believed firmly in carnal copulation with devils, and who speaks of it in a number of places in his *Démonomanie*, does not appear to be concerned with the unnatural disorders which the Devil committed with the sorcerers, and especially with the sorceresses. He undoubtedly shared the opinion of those demonologists who would have it that the sin against nature was not so abhorrent to devils as to men. One might, nevertheless, without offering any insult to the sons of Satan, presume that they were not any more reserved on this point at the sabbath than they were in Hell. An English monk of Evesham, who descended to Hell in the year 1196, under the conduct of St. Nicolas, describes thus the extraordinary sights which he there beheld: "There is there an abominable punishment, shameful and horrible beyond the others, to which are condemned those who in their mortal lives have been guilty of that crime which a Christian cannot name, of which the pagans themselves and the Gentiles stand in horror. These miserable wretches were assailed by enormous monsters, who appeared to be of fire, and whose hideous and frightful forms surpass all that the imagination might conceive. Despite their resistance and their vain efforts, they were constrained to suffer the abominable approaches of these demons. In the midst of these terri-

fying copulations, the unfortunate ones burst forth in groans. Sometimes they would fall, deprived of all feeling, and as though dead; but it was required of them to come back to life and be born anew for the punishment. Oh grief! the number of these infamous ones was as infinite as their punishment. . . . In that horrible place, I did not recognize nor seek to recognize anyone, so great was the insurmountable disgust inspired in me by the enormity of the crime, the obscenity of the punishment and the stench which it exhaled." (*Grande Chronique* of Matthew Paris, translated by A. Huillard-Breholles, Volume II, page 265.)

The sorcerers, then, made no scruple about imitating the manners of the Devil, who thus set an example of the most detestable vices, not only in Hell, but on the Earth. The sabbath was, in all times and in all countries, a school of sacrilege and of Prostitution. It was there that all the sorcerers and sorceresses assembled, says Antonio de Torquemada, in his *Hexameron*, "and a number of devils with them, in the form of gentlemen and beautiful women, and they mingled together *au rebours* and accomplished their disorderly and unclean desires." Things do not appear to have been any different in other cases, whenever Satan dealt with men. In the time of Guibert de Nogent, a monk suffering from a grave malady had received treatment at the hands of a Jewish physician who was very expert in the healing art; he conceived the fatal idea of looking on the Devil; the latter, summoned by the Jew, presented himself at the monk's pillow, and promised him health, riches and science in exchange for a sacrifice. " 'Eh! What sacrifice?' demanded the monk. . . . 'The sacrifice of what is most delicious in man.' . . . 'And what is that?' " And then the demon had the audacity to explain. "Oh villainy! oh shame!" exclaims Guibert de Nogent (*De Vita Sua*, Book I, Chapter 26), "and the one of whom this was demanded was a priest! . . . And the poor wretch did what was demanded of him. And it was as a result of this horrible libation that he came to deny the Christian faith." The sorcerers, like their infernal patrons, had strange fantasies; they frequently deprived their sorry victims of the sexual parts, devoting these parts to the abominations of the sabbath. "They have not," says Bodin, "the power of taking away a single one of a man's members, except the virile parts, which is what they do in Germany, causing the shameful parts to retire and take to hiding in the belly. On this head, Spranger tells us how a man by the name of Aspire,

believing himself to have been deprived of his virile parts, summoned physicians and surgeons, who were unable to find any wound of any sort. "And afterwards, having appeased the sorceress whom he had offended, he was restored." This *attentat* of sorcery against virility was repeated very frequently under the form of "eagle's knot"* (*noeud de l'aiguillette*); and when the sorcerer did not practice magical castration upon the victim, he would deprive him, so to speak, of the animating power of his sex, which he would appropriate for himself. The demonologists have interpreted this fact by saying that the Devil accepted as a sacrifice the attributes and trophies of lust, whereas the sorcerers reserved the use of these for themselves, in order to accomplish the monstrous debaucheries of the sabbath.

Among these debauches must be included the crime of bestiality, which would have appeared to have been a very common one in the nocturnal assemblages of sorcerers. This execrable crime, so frequent among the ancients, made its appearance but rarely in the modern tribunals, where it met invariably with the capital penalty: the guilty one was burned alive with his accomplice, whatever the rank of the latter in the scale of animate beings. But this very crime appeared to be inherent in that of sorcery, and the jurisprudence of the Middle Ages felt that any individual of either sex who had taken part in the sabbath, was, by that fact alone, to be suspected of bestiality. Bodin does not express himself upon this point, except with a reserve which bears witness to the horror that such a subject inspired in him. "And when the Law of God," he says, citing the 22nd Chapter of *Exodus*, "forbids permitting the sorceress to live, it is stated, immediately afterward, that *Whosoever lieth with a beast shall surely be put to death*. Now, the meaning of the Law of God touches covertly on incredible villainies and wickedness; as when it is forbidden to *offer* to God the wages of prostitution or the price of the dog! This refers to the lechery of the wicked with dogs." Bodin had spoken elsewhere of this infamy, which he hesitated to look upon as a personal act of the Devil. "Sometimes," he said, "the bestial appetite of certain women conveys the impression of the presence of a devil, as happened in the year 1566, in the diocese of Cologne. There was found in a monastery a dog who was said to be a demon, who lifted the robes of the religious to abuse them. This was not a demon, in my opinion, but a natural dog. There was found at Toulouse a woman who committed an abuse of this sort,

*Translator's Note:—Cf. the Roman superstition regarding knots (J. U. N.).

and the dog, in the presence of all, attempted to force her. She confessed the truth and was burned."

And yet, Bodin might have recalled the description of the sabbath, where Satan affected the form of a dog, or a bull, or an ass, or a goat, in order to receive the sacrifices of his worshipers. In such case, he might have reproached himself with having too hastily cleared Satan's skirts, at the expense of the human species. "It may be," he says, revising his statement somewhat, "that Satan is sent of God, even as it is certain that all punishment comes of Him, by ordinary means or otherwise, in order to avenge such a villainy; as happened at a monastery in Germany, where the religious were demoniacal. There one might have seen upon the beds dogs indecently awaiting those who were addicted to such abuse, namely, that sin which they call the silent sin." (*Démonomanie des Sorciers*, Book III, chapter 6.) Bayle, in his *Responses aux Questions d'un Provincial*, appears to have been animated by a desire to explain and motivate all the conduct which was attributed to sorceresses, by proving that the majority of these were old debauchees, who were unable any longer to gratify their imaginations and their depraved senses, except by supernatural and diabolical relations. "Such was, before the Deluge, the taste of the demons," he says, in Chapter LVII; "they would have only the beautiful: but they became less delicate with time, until finally we see them at the other extremity: they will have nothing but the ugliness of old age. It is only with old women that they any longer marry, if it is permissible to make use of this word in connection with that carnal commerce which they have with the sorceresses, and which begins regularly after the first homage that the latter pay to the one who presides over the sabbath, a homage that is repeated thereafter every time the witches return to that assemblage; *non aliter haec sacra constant*, without counting the extraordinary occasions." (See Bodin, Chapters 4 and 7 of the second book of his *Démonomanie*, and also Antonio de Torquemada.) One should not forget to remark that, in view of the form they took and the homage they demanded, the ugliest mouths would have been all too beautiful for them; *similes habent labia lactucas*, was the proverbial saying. (See Torquemada, *Jardin de Flores Curiosas*. Antwerp 1575, in-12, page 294)

All writers who have brought a critical and philosophic spirit to bear upon the arcana of sorcery have not failed to remark the species of uterine fury which the devil superexcited, in old women rather than

in young ones. The learned and grave professor, Thomas Erastus, admits, it is true, that sorceresses of all ages were to be met with; but he demonstrates doctorally that the majority of them were aged, for the reason that old age, in certain feminine natures, exalts the physical passions, in place of extinguishing them. "Before being sorceresses," he says, "these women were libidinous, and they become more and more so in their relations with the demons." He compares them to old nanny-goats who incessantly seek the caresses of the he-goat. *Hinc proverbio apud nostros factus est locus, vetulas capras libentius lingere sales juvenculis.* He adds that one should not be astonished at seeing women who have lost all fear of God, and all modesty, giving themselves to those excesses which old age does not spare other women, women who are to be pitied rather than blamed: *Quis dubitet illas immodestius, majoreque ardore, ad impuritatem sine rationis fraeno aut infamiae metu, brutorum instar ferri?* (See the treatise of Th. Erastus, *De Lamiis*, pages 30 and 113.) The demons, those masters of impurity, as a certain mystic calls them, were but too inclined to give free reign to their weird and unclean imaginations; one could not remain in their company without there contracting the most deplorable habits. Sorcery was a school of perdition, in which man and the Devil appeared to be engaged in a contest of incontinence and lubricity. The initiation consisted always of some horrible sin, in which Satan had his part. Thus, to cite but one fact among a thousand, the Sibyl of Norcia, so celebrated in the Middle Ages as the Queen of a school of magic, to which one went to be initiated at his own peril, received in a singular fashion the curious ones who came to visit her in her cavern. "The Sibyl and all those who inhabit her realm," says Bayle (*Responses aux Questions d'Un Provincial*, Chapter 58), "take each night the form of a serpent, and it is necessary for all those who desire to enter the cavern to have an affair with one of these serpents. This is their début, their initiation; it is thus one pays the entrance fee (see Leandro Alberti. *Descritt, di tutta Italia*, fol 278): *La notte, tantoi mascoli quanto le femine, doventano spaventose serpi, insieme con la sibilla, e che tutti quelli che desiderano entrarci, gli bisogna primieramente pigliare lascivi piaceri con le dette stomacose serpi.*"* There was a continual flood of pilgrims who came to seek adventure in this cavern. The Sibyl gave audience to all, and sometimes she would

*Translator's Note:—Serpent worship again. Cf. also the worms and dragons of Arthurian and Teutonic epic and legend (J. U. N.).

take the place of the serpents in order to entertain her guests. At such times, the beautiful fairies who made up her court would also change into serpents, into lizards, into scorpions and into crocodiles, to mingle in a frightful witches' sabbath, where they were to be seen, according to the ingenious Blaise de Vignere, in his notes on the *Tableaux de Platte Peinture* of Philostratus, "demanding a very ugly and hideous service." Woe to the simple mortal who did not obey the orders of the Sibyl, or who executed them badly! He fell a prey to the reptile's lubricity, until he was delivered by the fortunate arrival of a hermit or a monk.

It is evident from all these facts, and from a multitude of other similar ones, that sorcery always had an eye to Prostitution. Apart from a small number of magicians and confirmed sorceresses, every one who had been initiated served others or forced others to serve him in an abominable debauchery. The sabbath opened the door to all turpitudes; sometimes it resembled a hideous assemblage of libertines of both sexes; sometimes it brought together, for the profit of certain libidinous knaves, a troop of credulous and fascinated women. In such a case it was a means for the fulfilment of lust, while in the other it was merely the occasion. It may be concluded, from the evidence of the accused in various sorcery trials, that all the benefits of the sabbath accrued to one individual, who debauched the young girls and who tried out upon the initiates his own odious and perverse inventions. On a great many occasions, the rôle of the Devil was taken by some wicked wretch, who abused it in order to satisfy his own horrible caprices, by demanding an obscene tribute from the miserable ones under his domination. In one of the last sorcery trials, in 1632, the curate Cordet, who was judged and condemned at Epinal, was accused of having introduced the *ribaude* Cathelinotte to the sabbath and of having presented her to Master Persin, a great black man, cold as ice, *etiam in coitu*, clad in red, seated upon a throne covered with black skins and engaged in pinching the cheeks of neophytes, in order to cause them to deny God and the Virgin. (*Archives d'Epinal*, quoted by E. Bétin.)

In a trial of the same sort, which a few years before had been given an immense amount of publicity, it was learned that a curate of the parish of Accouls at Marseilles, named Louis Gaufridi, had given himself to the Devil, on condition that he might inspire love in women and girls by breathing upon them. He had breathed upon the young

Magdeleine, daughter of a Provençal gentleman named Madole de la Palud, when the girl was not yet nine years old. He afterwards breathed upon others of the sex who refused nothing that he asked. Magdeleine de la Palud continued, in spite of herself, to be the mistress of Gaufridi, who had caused her to enter the religious order of St. Ursula. Finally, this seducer of innocence, pursued by the Inquisition, confessed his crime, and declared that he had had a number of private sessions with Magdeleine in the church as well as in the house, by day as well as by night; that he had known her carnally, and that he had imprinted upon her body various diabolic marks, that he had gone with her to the witches' sabbath, and that he had there committed, in her presence, an infinite number of scandalous, impious and abominable actions, to the glory of Lucifer. Louis Gaufridi was burned alive at Aix, in the Place des Jacobins, after having made honorable amends, with his head and hands naked, the rope on his neck and a lighted torch in his hand.

One might cite a multitude of sorcery trials in which moral depravity is to be seen covered with the mantle of diabolic possession, all the ensuing misdeeds being attributed to the tyranny of Hell; but it is easy to see that even those who pretended to have yielded to an occult and irresistible power, did not always believe in the intervention of demons. They were, ordinarily, shameful libertines, compelled by circumstances to live a continent life, or at least to conceal under a respectable exterior, the effervescence of their sensual passions; they were priests, they were monks, who gave themselves in secret to the demon of the flesh. The sabbath was the rendezvous of the perverse; that is why it was held in isolated places, in the depths of woods, in the mountains, among rocks; and the place selected for these assemblages of nocturnal debauchery was always one that, from time immemorial, had always been devoted to the same purpose. It would appear to be, then, an established fact, that the sorcerers, at least a majority of them, only employed magic for the sake of Prostitution, and that, if the sorceresses were frequently of good faith, though blinded and fascinated by their own imaginations, the "devils" who held regular relations with them belonged all to the lowest order of debauchees.

By this may be explained why it was that ecclesiastic and secular justice was so rigorous in punishing the sorcerers and sorceresses; it had seen in sorcery all the most execrable deeds of human depravity,

and when it condemned a sorcerer, it merely applied to him the penalties of incest, sodomy and bestiality, as though he were guilty of all these crimes. Sorcery, which was nothing else than debauchery, as we believe we have proved, spread in so furious a manner throughout Europe in the sixteenth century that the famous *Trois-Échelles*, who was condemned to the flames in 1571, and who obtained a pardon on condition that he denounce all his accomplices, told the King the number of sorcerers in France might be estimated at 300,000. "He found a great number, rich and poor," says Bodin; "some always aid the others to escape, and as a result, this vermin has constantly multiplied, which testifies at once to the long suffering of the judges charged with hunting them down." This leniency had made of all France a vast arena of sorcery or of Prostitution. There were but 100,000 sorcerers in the realm during the reign of Francis I, according to the calculation of Père Crespet, in his treatise, *De la Haine de Satan*. *Trois-Échelles*, who undoubtedly was well versed in statistics of this sort, revealed the fact that the number had tripled in less than half a century. Filesac, a doctor of the Sorbonne and another demoniacal statistician, wrote, in 1609, that the sorcerers were more numerous than the prostitutes. He cites, in support of this, two verses of Plautus, meaning that there are more prostitutes and procurers than there are flies in summer:

*Nam nunc lenonum et scortorum plus est fere,
Quam olim muscarum est, cum caletur maxime.*
Trucul., Act I, sc. 1.

He adds, in his treatise, *De Idolatria Magica*: "*Etiam magos, maleficos, sagas, hoc tempore, in orbe christiano, longe numero superare omnes fornices, et prostibula, et officosos istos, qui homines inter se convenas facere solent, nemo negabit, nisi elleborosus existat, et nos quidem tantam colluviem mirabimur ac perhorrescimus.*" This denunciation did not by any means have the effect of causing the half of France to be judged by the Inquisition, but this opinion of the grave Filesac did lead the jurisconsults to see in sorcery merely a form of the most criminal Prostitution, and one which they felt obliged to punish with all the severity of the law, in order to suppress those disorders which were corrupting public morals and which would have ended by destroying society in the very bud. It was the habit to attribute to the malice of the Devil a number of execrable acts which were indicative

merely of human depravity; and care was taken not to diminish the horror with which vulgar credulity surrounded the sabbath, for if things had been shown in their true light, the sabbath would have been still more frequented, curiosity being a ready motive to moral and physical depravation. The tribunals were merciless toward sorcerers, but it is certain that, in general, they knew the Devil to be a stranger to those crimes of human and divine *lèse majesté* which debauchery was in the habit of attributing to sorcery. One might, then, up to a certain point, justify the terrible legislation of the Middle Ages regarding sorcery, and it might be proved that society was forced to defend itself thus, by steel and by fire, against the invading gangrene of public Prostitution.

CHAPTER LXV

WE HAVE already viewed, in the first centuries of the Christian era, sacred Prostitution as a survival of paganism reproducing and perpetuating itself in the form of heresy; we have seen heresies, founded upon the satisfaction of the senses, multiplying to an endless degree in the bosom of the Church of Christ, lending themselves effervescently to all the disorders of the physical passions. We have been able to understand how nascent Christianity, which appealed only to noble and generous impulses of the mind, had had to employ rigorous means in restraining and wiping out the sects which tended to corrupt morals and which threatened the future of the new society, by giving free rein to the blind and futile forces of matter. But the persecution of the Councils, directed by the secular arm of the Greek and Latin Churches, had not succeeded in annihilating heresy, although they had caused the disappearance from the face of the Christian world of heresiarchs and the heretics; after bloody wars, after innumerable punishments and massacres, the principle of heresy remained a lively and perservering one, for this principle was none other than that of Sacred Prostitution.

That is how heresy, in varying its form and changing its name, comes to bob up incessantly throughout the Middle Ages; that is why Prostitution frequently endeavored to take refuge in heresy, as in a fortress where it might brave with audacity the morality of the Gospel and the austerity of Christian doctrine. There were, undoubtedly, in the different heretical sects, doctors and philosophers who took part in good faith in the metaphysical discussions, and who sought only the truth, with passion if not with discernment; but the vulgar, the false and perverse minds, the weak or depraved imaginations, the ardent and vicious natures were attracted to the pursuit of material pleasures, and beheld, in the practices of religion, only an excuse for a shameful sensuality. No better explanation can be given for the invincible stubbornness of heresy, which had constant recourse to the same seductions, and which everywhere obtained the same results.

From the twelfth century to our day, heresy has made numerous appearances in France, in which appearances we may recognize, ordinarily, the germs of Manicheism and the fruits of Prostitution.

Bayle, in his *Dictionary*, takes up the question of Manicheism, in order to demonstrate that this form of heresy was born quite naturally of the struggle between the passions in the life of man. "How can it be," he says, (article on Guarin) "that the human race should be attracted toward evil by an almost irresistible force, I mean to say, by the sentiment of pleasure, or that it should be turned away from evil by fear of remorse or by that of infamy and many other pains? . . . Manicheism came apparently from prolonged meditation on this deplorable state of man."* Bayle reasoned like a philosopher, but the majority of the Manicheans were not capable of reasoning in such a manner. They accepted, with eyes closed, a dogma and a cult which thus favored sensuality and libertinism; and religion thus became for them a continual excitation to debauchery.

It is our plan here to indicate rapidly the presence of Prostitution in France in the form of heresy at nearly all periods. It must be remarked, first of all, that in each heresy from the end of the twelfth century, the sectaries held secret assemblages, by night rather than by day, in desert or enclosed places. These assemblages had for object or pretext the practice of a cult; in some cases, the two sexes were united; in others, they were separated; at other times, the men alone were admitted to these mysterious *cénacles*. Everything took place there in proper order, for nothing was done but to pray and worship in common; but in certain cases, abuses and disorders arose, inspired by the impurity of certain false apostles or neophytes, and public opinion soon laid hold of these scandalous rumors concerning the meetings of the heretics. The latter were accused of putting out their lights at a given signal, and of then yielding, in the darkness, to all the distractions of the flesh. Occasionally, they were credited with the most shameful excesses of promiscuity; at other times, they were reproached with having outraged nature by the abominable practices of sodomy.

The Bulgarians, who did not become numerous in France until the end of the twelfth century, had begun from the tenth century to spread over Europe and to settle in Bulgaria, where they possessed a sort of pope, or Prester John, who was their spiritual head. The name

**Translator's Note*:—J. U. N. notes: But see Schopenhaur's *Studies in Pessimism* for an exposition of this necessity for evil. "Nobody will very readily regard a doctrine as true merely because it makes people happy and virtuous."—Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*.

of Bulgarians, belonging at that time to a nation, became the name of a sect, and spread to all countries along with the heresy itself, which was nothing but the Manicheism of old. This name was soon corrupted in the French language which was spoken at this period; in place of *Bulgares*, one came to say *bougares* and *bouguères* (*bugari* and *bugeri* in the low Latin); from *bouguères* came *bougres*, and under this generic qualification were included all depraved men who conformed in their manners to the doctrine and example of true Bulgarians. These latter regarded as a sacrilege the natural relations of the two sexes, even in a state of marriage; they did not tolerate carnal intercourse between a married pair, except with a view to the procreation of children; sometimes, even, they forgot this providential destiny of humanity and absolutely forbade the man all sexual relations with the woman. So monstrous a heresy against the law of nature could not fail to expose the Bulgarians to the gravest accusations, which they perhaps tended to confirm by their manner of life. However this may be, their heresy made frightful progress, especially in Languedoc, when Philip-Augustus, according to a manuscript *Chronicle* quoted by Ducange (under the word *Bulgari*), "sent his son into Albigeois to destroy the heresy of the *bougres* of the country." The same *Chronicle* adds, under the year 1225: "In that year the *bougres* of Friar John, who were of the order of Preaching Friars, broke out."

As to the heresy itself, which kindled expiatory flames throughout all Europe, it cannot be stated positively whether or not it was responsible for the horrible abominations of which it was popularly accused; but it is evident that this heresy, which the contemporary chroniclers describe as "of the lowest dregs" (*omnium errorum faex extrema*, says the monk of Auxerre), had for synonym the word *bouguerie* or *bougrerie*, which in itself was enough to provoke the rigor of the legislative authorities toward the Bulgarians. St. Louis, in his *Etablissements*, did not hesitate, despite his well-known charity and clemency, to demand the death penalty against the heretics: "If anyone is suspected of *bouguerie*, justice shall take him and send him to the bishop, and if it is proved, he must burn." The Bulgarians, in order to escape the general reprobation which pursued them throughout France, were forced to change their name; they endeavored to mingle with the Albigeois, who repelled them with horror; they also endeavored to attach themselves to the Vaudois, who declined, however, to be branded with their infamous name. They were called,

successively, *Paterins*, *Patares*, *Cathares*, *Joviniens*, etc., but under these different names, they were equally suspected of *bouguerie*, and they did not escape the stake when they fell into the hands of the inquisitors: They might even be accused, on account of the horror which they inspired, of having provoked, under the reign of Louis VIII, the Crusade against the Albigeois, with whom public opinion obstinately confused them.

One might find, with the aid of etymology, in the very names of these ignoble heretics, a proof of the turpitude which characterized their impure sect. The name of *bulgari* is derived from *bulga*, which signifies at once a leather saddle bag, a purse and a man's breeches. Ménage and Leduchat did not stop at this single etymology, which still is sufficient to imply all that we blush to explain. The name of *Baterini* seems to have been formed by contraction from *Paterni* and *Paterniani*, heretics who were also Manicheans, and who, in the time of St. Augustine, held that the inferior parts of the body had been created not by God but by the Devil, and that the latter, as a consequence, made no scruple of making use of those parts for his own shameful purposes (*omnium ex illis partibus flagitiorum licentiam tribuentes impurissime vivunt* says St. Augustine). From *Paterin* or *Patarin* had come *patalin* and *patelin*, which latter has remained in the language to express the fact that these heretics made use of obscene caresses (*palpando*) toward those proselytes whom they desired to seduce to evil. The name of *Cathari*, according to the learned Godefroi Henschenius, quoted by Ducange, had for root a German word, *caters* which means a cat or an incubus, and this soubriquet, applied to the Bulgarians, bore allusion to their assemblages of debauchery (*propter nocturnas coitones*).*

All the sectaries, by a refinement of libertinism, imposed upon themselves privations of every sort and affected in general a complete detachment from material things; this, however, was but a mask of continence and self-abnegation, under which they felt more at ease, in giving themselves to their passions and in giving a free rein to nature. Their practices of austere devotion were a sort of spice to their secret debaucheries. It was always Prostitution which gave a

*Translator's Note:—It is more probable, however, that the word was derived from the Low Latin *Catharista*, from Gr. *Katharos*, clean, pure, whence our *Catharist* (one who pretends to excessive purity) and our *Catharsis* and *Cathartic*, that which purges or makes clean (J. U. N.).

glow to proselytism, and which provided an occult attraction to heresy. There is no other explanation for the favor accorded to each new metamorphosis of Manicheism, despite the perils of Catholic persecution. A number of sects born out of France, that of the Stadings in 1232, that of the Fratricelles in 1296, that of the Begghards (Beghards) or Beghins (Beguins) in 1312, and many others not less bizarre did not have so long or so tenacious an existence as the sect of Bulgarians, for the reason that they were not equally favorable to the evil instincts of man. When the rise of the sect of Flagellants occurred in 1259, there was no suspicion at first that the voluntary penances of these sinners who flagellated themselves in public might be an invention of lust. The new heretics marched in procession, two by two, preceded by the cross and by banners; they were nude down to the girdle (*solis pudendis honeste velatis*) in the greatest cold of winter, and they lashed themselves or each other with whips and leather thongs, emitting great groans all the while and bursting into torrents of tears; they did not hesitate to cover themselves with blood, and, when the blood came, only continued their mutual fustigation with the greater fury. This was not all: they would betake themselves, by night, in the country, to the depths of woods and to isolated and ill-favored places; there, in the darkness or by the light of the torch, they would redouble their flagellations, their cries and their insanely obscene carryings-on. It is easy to divine the odious consequences of these gatherings of half-clad men and women, animated by the spectacle of so indecent a pantomime, in which each became an actor in his turn, until the last paroxysm of libidinous ecstasy was finally reached.

The casuists assert that this individual or reciprocal fustigation resulted ordinarily in a physical superexcitation of the senses; but they pretend that the one who underwent it incurred all the more merit by overcoming nature and by preserving his chastity under the lively prickings of sin. Other casuists, on the contrary, insisted that the immediate effect of the flagellation was to repress the disorderly impulses of the flesh and to hold in check the demon lodged in the shameful parts. Behold in what terms the Abbé Boileau, in his *Histoire de Flagellans* has dared to translate this strange proposition: *Nec esse est cum musculi lumbares virgis aut flagellis diverberantur, spiritus vitales revelli, adeoque solaces motus ob viciniam partium genitalium et testium excitari, qui venereis imaginibus ac illecebris*

cerebrum mentemque fascinant ac virtutem castitatis ad extremas angustias redigunt. However this may be, it cannot be doubted that the Flagellants, who had borrowed from paganism the indecent ceremonial of the Lupercalia, found in these penances a spur to debauchery and a strange revival of sensuality. The custom of flagellation in antiquity was well known to all debauchees, who made use of its aid in preparing themselves for the pleasures of love, but in the Middle Ages, if erotic flagellation was practiced but rarely, and was then surrounded by a deep mystery, it had, on the other hand, taken on a sanguinarily ferocious character in the acts of the Flagellants. Pico della Mirandola, in his *Dissertation against the Astrologers*, (Book III, Chap. 27) indicates clearly enough what the flagellation of the heretics must have been like, in describing the frightful pleasure experienced by a libertine (*prodigiosae libidinis et inauditae*) who caused himself to be beaten with rods until the blood flowed from all parts of his body: *Ad Venerem numquam accendetur nisi vapulet. Et tamen scelus id ita cogitat; saevientes ita plagas desiderat, ut increpet verberantem, si cum eo lentius egerit, haud compos plene voti, nisi eruperit sanguis, et innocentes artus hominis nocentissimi violentior scutica desaevierit.* This infamous man arrived at pleasure through pain, and the sight of his own blood constituted the climax of his sensual frenzy.*

The sect of Flagellants, which came from Italy and which had rapidly propagated itself throughout all Europe, did no more than show its head in France in the course of the year 1259, for the ecclesiastical powers took it upon themselves to crush this heresy, which was but a hideous form of Prostitution; but a century later, the flagellants reappeared in France, principally in the provinces of the East and the North, and began once more their public penance by means of lashes equipped with iron points, singing songs all the while, and inciting one another to be steadfast. There was a communal penance in which men and women, their heads and faces veiled, their shoulders and loins nude, would exchange disciplinary blows. There was also the individual penance, in which each one received from the hand of the *général de la dévotion* a number of blows corresponding to the nature of the sin he had to expiate. The penitents all lay stretched on the ground, in various positions, according to the different kinds of sin: the perjurer raised three fingers in the air; the adulterer lay

*Translator's Note:—Cf. the experiences of the Austrian, Masoch. It is to be noted that sadism and masochism are derived from the same neurotic condition (J. U. N.).

flat on his belly; the drunkard pretended to be drinking, the miser to be fleeing his gold; all exposed those parts of the body which were to be fustigated; this fustigation was distributed by the head of the confraternity with a vigorous arm, in a pro rata fashion, according to the sins represented by the mute pantomime of the Flagellants. The people came running in a throng to these scandalous spectacles, and admired with enthusiasm the constancy of these voluntary martyrs, who permitted themselves to be flogged as much as they, in their turn, flogged. In 1343, during the great Black Plague, 800,000 Flagellants were to be found in France, among them gentlemen and noble dames, who were not less avid than the rest for public fustigation, and who abandoned their castles and their families to enroll in these bands of fanatics and libertines.

It is not hard to understand how it was these bands came to disappear in so short a time before the horror and disgust of honest folk; but religious flagellation survived;* it was, from then on, concentrated in the convents, and no longer outraged the modest glances of passers-by. There was, however, one occasion when it dared to leave the monastic cells and to promenade brazenly through the streets of Paris; that was when King Henri III endeavoured to establish the Order of Penitence, and himself took part in the processions of the *Battus*. This last attempt at public flagellation proves clearly enough how great a part libertinism played in such acts of simulated or incoherent devotion.

In the majority of heresies proceeding from Manicheism, the sectaries did not blush at bodily nakedness; they regarded it even as an essential condition of that more or less abominable form of worship which they paid to God. The Adamites, who had never ceased to exist in the bosom of the Christian Church, where they avoided always any cause of scandal, did not demand this nudity except in their secret ceremonies; but one of their adepts named Picard (this name may have been but the designation of his native country) was not content with occasional nudity; he desired that he and his disciples should be always nude. He called himself the Son of God and announced that his father had sent him into the world, like the new Adam, to reestablish the law of nature.** Now, according to him, this law of nature

**Translator's Note*:—And still survives: in New Mexico, for example (J. U. N.).

***Translator's Note*:—Cf. the various forms of the Nudist cult at present (1931) spreading over Europe.

consisted in two things: the nudity of all the parts of the body, and a community of women. *Picards* was the name given to those who listened to this obscene prophet and who were willing to live according to his law. Relations between the sexes, however, did not take place without permission of the head of the sect.* As soon as one of the Picardians experienced a desire for one of his companions, he would lead her to the Master and formulate his request thus: "My spirit glows for this one (*in hanc spiritus meus conculcavit!*)" The Master would respond with the Biblical words: "Be fruitful and multiply!" And this tells the whole story. The Picardians, who would have feared losing their original liberty by renouncing their cherished nudity, were obliged to seek a retreat outside of France, in order to escape the pursuits of the Inquisition. They took refuge in Bohemia, among the Hussites, who, wholly heretical as they themselves were, grew indignant at the infamy of these poor wretches and exterminated them to the last one, without even taking pity on the women, all of whom were pregnant, and who obstinately refused to clothe themselves in prison, where they went to child-bed with a smile, singing horrible songs. (See the *Dict. Hist.* of Bayle, under the word *Picards*).

It may be thought that Prostitution, in the form of heresy, could have gone no further; but in 1373, the Picardians were revived in France under the name of *Turlupins*. This name, the etymology of which has not been fixed in any certain manner, would appear to convey an allusion to the wandering and brutal life led by these new Adamites, who slept in woods like the wolves. Not only did they go naked like the Picardians, but they also, in the manner of the Cynics of ancient Greece, "did the works of the flesh in open day before all the world." These are the terms made use of by Bayle, who cites a curious passage from the discourse of Chancellor Gerson: "*Cynicorum philosophorum more omnia verenda publicitatis nudata gestabant, et in publice velut jumenta coïtu, instar canum in nuditate et exercitio membrorum pudendorum degentes.*" Their doctrine was almost that of the Begghards, who were condemned by the Council of Ravenna in 1312; they taught that man is free to obey all the instincts of nature, and that perfection resides in a liberty without bounds; they added that the creature ought to be proud of everything he has received from the

*Translator's Note:—Cf. the usages of our present day Doukhoboores of Canada and Russia (J. U. N.).

Creator. That was why they attached so great a value to their state of nudity. They were obliged, however, to cover themselves, doubtless on account of the cold; but they were careful not to conceal the attributes of sex, and they passed a law requiring that all those parts which they looked upon as divine be exposed to public view. The learned Genebrard states positively, in his *Chronicle*, that the detestable sect was to be recognized by this partial nudity, which it everywhere affected: *Turelupini cynicorum sectam suscitantes, nuditate pudendorum et publico coitu.*

These infamous beings had multiplied in Savoy and in Dauphiny, but their principal organization was in Paris, and had at its head a woman named Jehanne Dabentonne, who was burned alive at Marché-aux-Prouceaux, near the Porte Saint-Honoré. The books and habits of the confraternity were burned at the same time, along with a number of the *prescheurs* of this superstitious religion, which had taken the name of Fraternity of the Poor. Charles V sent Jacques de More of the Order of St. Dominic into the midland provinces to extirpate the sect; and Jacques de More, who took the singular title of *inquisiteur des bougres de la province de France* (see the *Glossary* of Ducange, under the word Turelupini), showed no grace to any Turlepins, male or female, who might be taken in a flagrant act. There soon remained of this shameful fraternity nothing but the proverbial word *turlepin*, which is still employed in an unpleasantly jocular sense, probably as the souvenir of the eccentric preachings and the ridiculous costumes of the sect of Jehanne Dabentonne.

There were still other heresies in which the most criminal sort of Prostitution put on the cloak of religion. Thus the famous *Vauderie* of Arras, in the 15th century, was but an imitation of the Vaudois doctrine, which found in sorcery a pretext for nocturnal assemblages replete with abominable mysteries. We have related, in the preceding chapter, a part of these mysteries, which resemble the ordinary ceremonial of the sabbath of the sorcerers. But there were other meetings of the Vaudois which had nothing to do with the Devil and which were conducted in no more decent fashion; this was, indeed, a vast association for debauchery, organized by an apostate priest, who preached the most filthy variety of Epicureanism, himself setting the example. The vicar of the Inquisition in the diocese of Arras, seconded by the Comte d'Étampes, Governor of Artois, at first directed these prosecutions against the debauched women, who were the most dan-

gerous apostles of Vauderie; but soon after, bourgeois, squires, knights, and personages of distinction whom the new heresy already had perverted came to be included in these judiciary pursuits. The accused were subjected to torture; frightful revelations were wrung from them and a great many of them perished in the flames. This terrible persecution of the Vaudois of Arras lasted for more than thirty years and kindled thousands of human bonfires in Artois.

Vaudois, Anabaptists, Adamites, Manicheans were at no time entirely extinct; they always sprang up again from their own ashes, so true is it that libertinism holds an irresistible fascination for certain perverse, weak or depraved natures. Various heresies, however, invented by Prostitution, were current in Europe without entering France, or at least without making much progress there; thus, the Anabaptists, who manned whole armies in Holland and in Germany, put in merely an isolated appearance in the States of the Most Christian King. And yet, they afforded Prostitution a prodigious field, for not only did they teach that every woman is obliged to lend herself to the concupiscence of all men, but also that every man is equally called upon to satisfy all women. It is Prateolus who affirms this in his *Elenchus Hereseon* (Book I, p. 27), and following are the terms in which he defines this incredible heresy: *Dicunt postremo quamlibet mulierem obligatam esse ad coeundum cu quolibet viro eam petente, et contra eodem vinculo adstringuntur virum ad tantundem reddendum cuilibet mulieri hoc ab illo petenti.* Bayle, who indulges in some rather lively bantering on the subject of the impracticability of such a doctrine, holds with reason that this was a fable invented by the adversaries of the Anabaptists, with the object of rendering them at once odious and ridiculous. "The community of women," he says, "is not as abominable an institution as it would appear to be from this; the privilege of refusal is not taken away; the conscience is not bound to every sort of acquiescence." It was a little too much to endeavor to establish the principle that marriage is contrary to the law of God, and that woman, in order to conform to that law, must belong, successively or simultaneously, to all those who desire her. The virtue of the weaker, according to this contemptible heresy, was to be abandoned to the brutal and depraved passions of the stronger sex. Prostitution was introduced in this manner into the religious code of these fanatics, who provided the world the most atrocious scenes of murder, incendiarism and pillage; for Prostitution is like

a slippery path, hidden under flowers and leading to the abyss.

The Anabaptists were but Manicheans in disguise, like the majority of heretics after the 12th century who were careful not to avow their common origin. There were, moreover, in all these heresies, good and bad, both pure and impure adherents, so that each might follow the impulse of his nature, according to whether he obeyed the law of spirit or of matter. We may then agree with Beausabre, the learned historian of Manicheism, that the Manicheans had been frequently the victims of calumny. Must we, for example, believe the common report of all the horrors which were committed by them under cover of darkness? There are similar accusations to be found in all ages, and it is not to be forgotten that the Pagans attributed to the first Christians those dissolute manners and sacrilegious practices which the Christians were later to attribute to the heretics. We may, then, suppose that Paganism and Christianity made use of the same arms against their adversaries, whom they dishonored and slandered in the same fashion. In heresy, as in primitive Christianity, there were, undoubtedly, ardent, exulted, and perverse natures who employed the cult to gratify their senses, and who, by this procedure, justified the belief commonly established among the people regarding the abominations to be found in these assemblages where the lights were extinguished.

The reformers themselves were not exempt, from the beginning, from those insulting suspicions which always attached to nocturnal gatherings of the two sexes. Since these assemblages were surrounded with a profound mystery, in order to elude the curiosity and persecution of the Catholics and since the heretics sought out the darkest nights and the most retired places, it naturally came to be supposed that the new sect had good reason for hiding its ceremonies as well as its doctrine. The people were only too ready to spread these unworthy and lying rumors and to put faith in them. "I have heard tell," says Brantôme, in his *Dames Galantes*. "(I do not know if it is true, neither would I affirm it), that, in the beginning, the Huguenots founded their religion and did their preaching by night and in secret, from fear of being surprised, sought out and punished, even as they one day were in the rue Saint Jacques at Paris, in the time of King Henri II, where certain great dames that I know were surprised. After the minister had done his preaching, he ended by recommending charity to his hearers; and immediately afterward, the candles were put out, and

thereupon each and everyone, male and female, did works with his brother and sister in Christ, according to the will and power of each: a fact which I cannot rightly vouch for, but I have been assured that it is true, although it is possible it is a downright lie and imposture." And yet, despite the assertions of the Catholic Abbot of Brantôme, who goes on to relate the adventures of the beautiful Grotterelle at the meeting house of Poitiers (See *Dames Galantes*, Disc. I), it is practically certain that the 16th century heretics in France never gave rise to those scandals which the Anabaptists and the Adamites of the Low Country never failed to inflict upon public modesty. Thus, in the history of religious innovations in our country, one would find no fact to set over against that indecent assemblage which was held at Amsterdam on the 13th of February, 1535, in which seven men and five women, yielding to the excitations and the example of an Anabaptist prophet, despoiled themselves of all their vestments, hurled the latter into the fire and ran out through the streets in a state of complete nudity. (See the *Rel. des Tumultes des Anabapt*, by Laur. Hortensius.) We must come down to the Convulsionists of the 18th century in order to meet in France with anything analogous to this unenlightened Religious Prostitution.

This persistence of Prostitution in the form of heresy, in all times as in all countries, proves clearly enough the excellence of evangelical morality, which alone possesses the power to combat the gross appetite of sensuality. Heresy begins when the Christian, incessantly assailed and tormented by the demon of the flesh, has broken the bonds of continence and abandons himself to those deadly instincts which impel him to vice. If the disciples of Luther and of Calvin called the Court of Rome the *Great Prostitute*,* it was for the reason that the Roman Church, at the period when the reformers appeared, had entirely forgotten the precepts of Jesus Christ. Heresy this time was purified by the Gospel, whereas the Holy Seat became, so to speak, the shameful sanctuary of Prostitution. This was the heresy which caused Catholicism to blush for the depravity of its ministers and the corruption of its children; this was the heresy which had the glory of restoring chastity of manners to the religion of Jesus Christ.

*Translator's Note:—Cf. Aretino's play, *La Cortegiana*.

CHAPTER LXVI

WE have gone for the sources of this History to the works of the poets, the majority of whom led a vagabond and libertine life; we have pointed out the fact that these works were faithful mirrors of the depraved morals of the ages in which they were composed. It is no longer, however, to the poets that we shall look for the traces of public depravity at the end of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th centuries; it is in the sermons of the contemporary preachers that we shall find new colors, truer and bolder, for completing this strange picture of a wide-spread corruption, which bears witness to the impotence of human and divine laws against the demon of sensuality. Dulaure, who, in his *Histoire de Paris*, has also made use of the old sermons in painting the moral state of society at the same period, does not exaggerate things when he depicts Prostitution as the triumphant Queen of the 15th century; but he is wrong in saying that it "was but one of the least effects of the vices of government." Government had nothing to do with the matter. "Prostitution authorized by the kings," cries the impitiable Dulaure, "was still favored by the great number of celibates, priests and monks, by the debauchery of magistrates, of the army, etc." Dulaure does not agree with the thesis to be found in the *Apologie pour Hérodote*, in which Henri Estienne endeavors to prove that everything goes from bad to worse here below, "For," says the latter, "whatever corruption there may be, it is very likely that it is small by comparison with that which is to follow, in view of the fact that corruption always increases as by degrees."

The sermonists, and especially those who preached in a naïve or primitive style in order to make themselves more readily understood by the vulgar, afford us incontestable proofs of the perversity of their century, and one might, without fear of deception, accept as true the majority of the facts which they relate in their discourses. Olivier Maillard, Michel Menot, Jean Clérée, Guillaume Pepin and a number of other famous preachers, who did not pride themselves on rhetoric in the pulpit, exerted a more authoritative influence over their audiences, composed of the common people, when they spoke with that eloquence which comes from the heart, from good sense and from decency, and when they frankly painted the vices and turpitudes

which they desired to flay. They were undoubtedly gross and frequently brazen in their expressions, as in the examples they chose, but in striking hard, they struck none the less justly, and they certainly achieved very respectable results by means which were not always any too respectable. We may be assured that these sermons, which appear to us today ridiculous and scandalous, produced then a multitude of real conversions, and that the preacher, in descending from the pulpit, would behold the confessionals filled with repentant sinners. There has been much amusement in our day at the expense of these old preachers, who indulged in such bizarre oratorical methods, and who related a hoard of cock-and-bull stories with eccentric buffooneries, accompanied by the most incredible pantomime; but account has not always been taken of the sort of public who came to listen to the word, little enough edifying for us, of these preaching monks.

This public, among which the feminine sex was undoubtedly in the majority, was not noted for the decency of its manners nor for the purity of its intentions. It was composed of women and girls, indecently clad, engaged in what was called "hunting with the eyes" (*la chasse au regard*), flirting with men, making and keeping appointments often without leaving the church, seeking adventure and entering into gallant contracts, or *ventes d'amours*. "He who would lead his horse to the church to sell it," says the author of a manuscript Latin poem entitled *Matheolus Bigamus*, "would commit a very unseemly action, but those women who, under pretext of religion, come to the church to sell themselves, are they not still more blameworthy? Do they not convert the house of the Lord into a market-place of Prostitution?" The same poet goes on to enumerate all the churches and chapels of Paris where this prostitutes' fair was held, and which, by this fact, he says, with a candid impudence:

*Font à nos dames grand soulas!**

We have seen that Paris had, in the 15th century, "five or six thousand fine girls" (*cinq ou six mille belles filles*) devoted to legal Prostitution; it is a contemporary writer who fixes the figure for us. An Italian poet, Antonio Astezani, who travelled in France about this time, wrote in one of his letters, dated from Paris: "I have beheld with admiration an unbelievable number of beautiful girls; their manners were so gracious, so lascivious, that they would have inflamed

**Translator's Note*.—"Give to our ladies great solace."

Nestor the sage and old Priam himself." (See *Jeanne d'Arc*, by Berryat Saint-Prix, p. 311.) We have already reported, from the *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris*, that the provost of that city, Ambroise de Loré, had permitted the number of light women to increase beyond measure, in spite of the ordinances, until the author of the *Journal* is led to exclaim with indignation: "There are altogether too many of them at Paris!" Finally, there is no doubt in our mind, as we have already let it be understood elsewhere, that these light women, who were constantly arrested for violation of the law, at the doors of churches, with their rosaries, their *agnus-Dei* and their prayer books adorned with gold and silver, were the most assiduous followers of the preachers, whom they went to hear in order to indulge in amours (*faire des amoureux*)* Clément Marot, who gives us a picture of the scene in his *Dialogue de Deux Amoureux*, avows that he met his beauty at the church; this beauty was probably the laundry woman of the Palace (*lingère du Palais*), with whom he was greatly taken, up to the time when she bequeathed him certain unforgettable souvenirs. His friend asks him where it was he became so suddenly amorous. "In a church!" replies the poet, sighing,

*Là commencay mes passions! ***

The other bursts our laughing and cries gayly:

*Voilà de nos dévotions! ****

There have been many long dissertations with the object of determining whether the preacher who addressed this gallant crew did so in French or in Latin. Some insist that the sermons preached in the vulgar tongue had been put into Latin before being printed; others, on the contrary, have thought that, since the advocates pleaded in Latin, the preachers could not have made use of the popular language. The question, although treated with much erudition on one side as much as the other, has remained in the air; and this is not the place to seek the answer. We shall remark, merely, that Olivier Maillard, having preached at Brussels in French, it would be hard to believe that he had preached in Latin at Paris, at Tours and at Poitiers. It is

*Translator's Note:—Balzac's Conte *La Connestable* (J. U. N.).

**Translator's Note:—"There began my passion!"

***Translator's Note:—"And those are our devotions!"

probable that his sermons, recorded by means of stenography at the time they were delivered, were translated into macaronic Latin, like those of the Italian Guillaume Barletta, who preached at Venice in his own language, although his sermons have only been published in Latin. Now, this macaronic Latin was marvelously suited to the libertine burlesques of these popular preachers.

Olivier Maillard, whose reputation was made in the time of Louis IX, preached ordinarily at Saint-Jean-en-Grève, and it may be supposed that the disrespectful population in the neighboring streets came in a throng to his sermons, which had for subject the lust and debauchery of his times (*hujus temporis*, was his apropos remark.) He called people and things by their names, and he did not employ circumlocutions, except with the object of adding one stroke more to his gross picture; he does not appear to have any thought of the sanctity of the place where he utters his invectives against the agents and acts of Prostitution; he even affects to borrow his expressions from the vocabulary of that vice which he flagellates, but nevertheless, one could never accuse him, in spite of this license in terms of images, of an immorality which is not in his thought. It must be remembered, also, that in those days obscenity of language was not the result of an obscene life, and that, in treating of the gravest, most serious and most worthy subjects, the employment of a free word or an indecent figure of speech did not come as an outrage to chaste ears and honest hearts.

In order to appreciate properly the nature of Parisian Prostitution at the end of the 15th century, it is sufficient to extract from the sermons of Olivier Maillard and Michel Menot what they have to say about the bad houses, prostitutes, and the procurers of one sex or the other; it is sufficient to listen to the debauches and infamies of all sorts with which they reproach their contemporaries. We shall, by preference, make use in our quotations of the eloquent and colorful style of Henri Estienne, who has translated a great number of these same extracts, in his *Introduction au Traité de la Conformité des Merveilles Anciennes avec les Modernes, ou Traité Préparatif à l'Apologie par Hérodote*. Henri Estienne, good reformer that he was, took a malicious pleasure in holding Catholicism responsible for the incongruous and indecent liberties of the Catholic clergy, without reflecting that Luther and Calvin, in their sermons and in their writings, had displayed an equal lack of reserve in describing the excesses of the Great Roman Prostitute.

Let us commence with the places of debauchery. "There are prostitutes in all the streets of Paris," says Maillard; *Hodie quis vicus non abundet meretricibus?* (*Quadrages.*, S. 23.) He complains of the bourgeoisie of the city, "who rent their houses to whores, pimps and procuresses (*putains, maquereaux et maquerelles*). Item, that whereas King St. Louis had caused to be built a house for whores outside the city, the brothels were then in all corners of the city." He addresses the magistrates, to summon them to execute the ordinance of Saint Louis: *Ego facio appellationem, nisi deposueritis ribalda et meretrices a locis secretis. Habetis lupanar fere in omnibus locis civitatis.* "Where are the ordinances of King St. Louis?" he cries. "He had ordained that the bordeaux should not be near the colleges, in such fashion that the first thing the scholars would meet with upon leaving the college would be the brothel!" He also reproved proprietors of houses who were only concerned with getting a good rent; and yet, he confesses that, if the *ribaudes* had been chased out of the large cities, debauchery was all more rampant in those cities: *O maquerellae et meretrices! Et vos, burgenses, qui locatis domos ad tenendum lupanaria, ad exercendum suas immunditias et ut lenones vadant, vultis vivere de posterioribus meretricum?*

If there had been none but stationary and duly labeled brothels! But debauchery was everywhere, and not a house was exempt from it. It is Menot who energetically assures us of this: "*Nunc aetas juvenum est ita dedita luxuriae, quod non est nec pratum, nec vinea, nec domus, quae non sordibus eorum inficiatur.*" Menot adds that nothing but daughters of joy were to be seen, in the city as well as in the suburbs: "*In suburbiis et per totam villam non videtur alia mercatura.*" This merchandise was adapted to all ages and to all social conditions; the old as well as the young, married women as well as maidens, servant maids as well as their mistresses, indulged in what the preacher called a "traffic of their bodies" (*lucrum corporis*). *In cameris exercentur luxuriae, in senibus, juvenibus, viduis, uxoratis, filiabus, ancillis, in tabernis et consequenter in omni statu.* The taverns of the hosteleries, were then, as in all ages, dens of Prostitution. Michel Menot makes one of his newly married young people say: "You know that we cannot always have our wives near us, that we cannot wear them suspended from our girdles, or rather on our sleeves, and yet we young folk cannot do without women. And so, we come to the taverns, the hosteleries, the sweating-rooms and other good places; and there we

find chambermaids built for the trade, who are yet not worth much in silver; I should like to know if there is any harm in using such a one as your wife?" The public sweating-rooms served also as meeting places for lovers; Maillard frequently speaks of them, and in his sermon, *De Peccati Stipendio*, he addresses his audience thus: "Mesdames," he says to his lady parishioners, "do not go to the sweating-rooms (*stuphis*), and do not do there—you know what!"* The churches, which Prostitution, as we have said, did not respect any more than it did the taverns and the sweating-rooms, became themselves, at need, annexes to the bad houses. "If the pillars of the churches had eyes," cries Maillard, redoubling his vigor, "and if they saw what took place there, if they had ears to hear, and if they could speak, what would they say? I do not know; you priestly gentlemen, what have you to say?" (*Quadragesim*, Sermon 11.) We find, as a matter of fact, in all the old manuals of penance, a special designation for the sin of lust committed in a church, either during the offices or after the ceremonies, a number of degrees of this sin being indicated with corresponding penances. Maillard is astonished that the saints, who have their relics or their tombs in the churches where such abominations are committed, do not rise from their reliquaries and their sepulchres to snatch out the eyes of the lecheresses and their lovers.

Maillard and the other preachers of the time give us few details concerning the professional *ribaudes*; although they speak of "vile prostitutes" (*viles meretrices*), they appear to pity the latter. "Oh, poor sinful daughters!" cries the good Maillard, in his Sermon 14 (*Quadragesim*.), "O worldly women, who live with dogs (*mulieres mundanae, sociae canum!*) do not harden your hearts, but be instantly converted!" Elsewhere, he beseeches them again to return to God, as well as their pupils in debauchery; he adjures them not to lose their souls in the delights of the world: "*O peccatrices mulieres, et, vos, scolares cujuscumque conditionis, hortor vos in Domino Jesu quod propter delectationes mundi non perdati animas vestras!*" In another sermon, he summons them, these miserable daughters of the Devil (*vos, miserabiles filiae diaboli*), to be converted; he appeals at the same time to the courtezans who conceal their shameful profession and who practice it secretly (*vos, secretae meretrices, quae facitis pejora publica*). (Sermon 48.) It is to be seen that he has a feeling of charitable compassion for these unfortunate victims of Prostitution.

*Translator's Note:—Compare the previous description of the public baths at Rome (J. U. N.).

As to the agents of this Prostitution, he is pitiless in denouncing them to the hatred and contempt of honest folk, and in invoking against these infamous ones, all the rigor of the laws. "Are you here, gentlemen of justice?" he says one day. "What punishment do you provide for the pimps and the ruffians of this city?" Another time, he addresses himself again to the magistrates, inviting them to punish excitations of debauchery: "I appeal to you, gentlemen of justice, you who provide no punishment for such persons!" he says, assailing those lost women, who, after having made a traffic of themselves in the bad houses, traffic in others, whom they corrupt and sell, as it were, on the auction-block. "If there is in this city," continues Olivier Maillard, soaring to a true climax of eloquence, "if there is anyone who has stolen ten sous, he shall have the lash for the first time; the second time he shall have his ears cut off or his body mutilated in some other manner (for it is said: *Esset mutilatus in corpore*); if he robs for the third time, he shall be sent to the gallows; and now, tell me, gentlemen of justice, which is worse, to steal a hundred crowns or to steal a young girl?" (*Quadrages.*, Sermon 21.) This passage confirms what we have already said about the former trade of the vicious *courtières*. "*Nonne tales invenietis in illa civitate, quae in juventute, incipiunt lupanaria et semper continuant, et postmodum efficiuntur maquerellae?*" Olivier Maillard pursues with an edifying zeal all those degraded beings who are the go-betweens of Prostitution, and who live at its expense; he loads them with insults; he signals them out for public aversion; he seeks them out with his eye and designates them with his gesture in the midst of his groaning audience: "*Dicatis, vos, mulieres, posuistis filias ad peccandum; vos, mulieres, per vestros tactus impudicos provocastis alios ad peccandum? et, vos, maquerellae quid dicitis?*" (Sermon 37.) Those whom the furious friar addressed in this manner would drop their heads, blushing, and seek to escape the penance of being unmasked in public.

He continues his assault on these indecent old women; he would have them flayed alive: *Estis hic antiquae maquerellae: si essetis scoriatie, non essetis satis punitae!* (Sermon 41.) He pictures them as inspired by the Devil, and he does not conceal the fact that they are nearly as numerous at Paris as the poor girls whom they lead to sin: *Hoc tangit etiam diabolicas mulieres provocantes alias ad maleficiendum. Habetis in ista civitate multas mulieres quae provocant sorores suas ad immunditiam suam.* (Sermon 39.) But among all these vile creatures, those

whom he detests the most, those he devotes to the flames of Hell, are the mothers who themselves labor at the Prostitution of their daughters, under pretense of enabling them to earn a dowry: "*Suntne hic matres illae maquerellae filiarum suarum, quae dederunt eas hominibus de Curia ad lucrandum matrimonium suum?* (Sermon 1.)" He looks about him, as though to discover in the congregation one of these unnatural mothers; every one is greatly moved and expects something to happen. "We have," continues the preacher, "we have a number of mothers who sell their daughters, and who play the part of procuresses by compelling their daughters to earn their dowries in the sweat of their bodies! (*Et faciunt eis lucrari matrimonium suum ad poenam et sudorem sui corporis.*)" This form of Prostitution, the most hideous of all, must have been very frequent at that time, since the preachers are tireless in branding it with their anathemas. Lenot denounces it in almost the same terms as does Maillard: "The mothers," he says, "condemn their daughters by the bad example they set them, by the taste for luxury and adornments which they inspire in them, and by the too great liberty which they permit them. And what is far worse, and I cannot say this without shedding tears, they sell their own daughters to the purveyors of debauchery! (*Et quod plus est, quod et flens dico, numquid non sunt quae proprias filias venundant lenonibus?*)" The preachers are all in agreement on this horrible exploitation of marriageable daughters, under the eyes and at the instigation of their parents. Maillard does not hesitate to say to mothers of families: "Mothers, you give your daughters open robes and other indecent vestments in order to help them earn their dowry!" And to the fathers of families: "And you, good citizens, are you not prostituting your daughters, when you give them fine clothes and permit them to rouge themselves like idols!"

Everyone who had to do, directly or remotely, with the trade of Prostitution complained loudly of the censures, frequently personal, which the preacher addressed to them from his pulpit. This Maillard, after having branded with a red-hot iron the procuress-mothers, turns to the ladies who are whispering among themselves: "*Mesdames les bourgeoises,*" he says to them, "are you not of the number of those who force their daughters to earn their dowries in the sweat of their bodies (*ad sudorem corporis sui*)?" The light women besought him not to speak of them any more, but to confine his attacks, for example, to the barbers and the apothecaries. "I have told you," replied the

indomitable Maillard, "that such and such a young lady is no better than a procuress; but there are many others who are not known, but whom I shall denounce just the same (*Dixi vobis quae domicella quaedam est maquerella, et sunt multae secretae de quibus etiam loquar.*"—Sermon 41.) The sermons of the terrible Jacobin produced such an effect in the world of debauchery that the public women would say to their lovers: "So you have been to hear the preacher? I can see now that you are going to become a Carthusian, and that you do not care for women any more!" (*Quadrages.*, Sermon 39.)

These sermons show us that, at this period, procurers of the masculine sex were not less dangerous than those degraded women who practiced this vile trade. The preacher incessantly attacks those pimps and lenons (*lenones et maquerelli*) whom the rich, members of Parliament, abbots and canons were in the habit of employing in connection with their illicit loves. It is evident from a number of passages that the Prostitutes had pimps and purveyors who went through the city seeking customers for them: *Et, vos, meretrices*, he says in his 43d quadragesimal sermon, *quando lenones vestri querunt quod juvetis ac diligatis eos magis quam alios*. He calls them elsewhere procurers (*procuratores*). He does not cast upon these all the burden of the sin which they provoke, for we find him blaming a penitent who endeavors to excuse himself for having committed a fault by attributing it to one of these miserable vendors of human flesh: *Ille enim qui habuit unam juvenculam per medium alicujus maquerelli, non debet se excusare super eum, sicut nec illa quae dixit quod fuit tentata; itaque tentator compulit eam facere quod voluit, sicut aliquis ribaldus vel leno*. (Sermon 37). He invites these lenons to come to the foot of the cross of Christ, to repent and thus escape eternal damnation: *Audite, o pauperes peccatores, blasphematores, usurarii et lenones, et vos etiam, viles meretrices, time-tisne damnari?* (Sermon 1.) Michel Menot, who frequently refers to these ignoble intermediaries of debauchery in his sermons, does not invite them to repentance, as though he were convinced that they are too far gone in sin; he abandons them pitilessly to the torments of Hell. Following is the manner in which he treats them in his macaronic jargon: "*Est una maquerella quae posuit multas puellas to the trade; ad malum ibit*, she shall go from there, the big strumpet, *ad omnes diabolos, estne totum?* No, she shall not have so good a bargain, *non habebit tam bonum forum, sed omnes quas incitavit ad malum servient ei* with faggots and brushwood to warm her dirty sides!" (*Serm. quadrages.*, 2.)

Olivier Maillard, in a sermon delivered at Saint-Jean-en-Grève on the Monday before the first Sunday of Advent, gives us a curious picture of the rôle played by the lenons in amorous affairs. He tells how one of these agents of Prostitution (*aliquis maquerellus*) is charged by a Judge of the Court with a handsome ring which he is to bear to certain women of pleasure; there are five whom the messenger is to see one after another; the first is a Picardian; the second a Poitevine; the third a Tourangelle; the fourth a Lyonnaise; and the fifth a Parisienne. He betakes himself to the first and knocks at her door: Rap, rap, rap. The servant maid comes and demands: "Who is there?"—"Open," says the messenger, "and tell the madam that I am the servant of such and such a lord and that I would speak with her." The chambermaid returns to her mistress, who does not care to give audience to this messenger, and who sends word to him to leave. "That woman is good!" cries the preacher. The courtier of love then goes to knock at the door of the Poitevine; the servant opens and he is admitted to the presence of the lady who replies to him: "Say to your master that I am not what he takes me for (*Dicatis magistro vestro quod non sum talis seu de illis*)."

"This second woman is also good!" says the preacher, "but not so good as the first one!" The messenger goes to the third; he enters and shows her the ring. "Certainly," says this woman, "your ring is very beautiful and it pleases me very much."—"It is yours, if you want it," replies the man.—"I do not want it," she replies, "for I am afraid my husband might find it out." "That woman is bad!" cries the preacher, "for she consents in intent, although the fear of scandal prevents her from committing the act." The procurer is still better received by the fourth, who says to him: "The ring is beautiful, but I have a very jealous husband. If he knew what you are asking of me he would break my head; and so I cannot do what M. le President desires."—"This woman is worthless," adds the preacher, "because it is not the fear of God, but the fear of her husband which restrains her." The messenger then comes to the fifth, who was born at Paris and educated there. She keeps the ring and says to the servant: "Advise your master that on Wednesday my husband will be away from home, and that on that day I shall come to pay a visit to M. le President." "This woman," says Olivier Maillard, "this woman is worse than all the others!"

It is, above all, against the incontinence of the priests and the religious that the preachers thunder, and it is to be understood that, in

showing no grace to the impurities and the scandals of the secular and regular clergy, they were but conforming to the general opinion. The conduct of many ecclesiastics at this period must have been so shameful and so depraved that to wink at it would have been to approve it. Olivier Maillard is inflexible regarding those members of the clergy who have concubines à *pain et à pot*, or who haunt women of evil life. He does not hesitate to say that a bishop or an abbot, in frequenting a bad house, dishonors the persons who dwell in that house. He speaks constantly of "concubine-keeping priests" or "fornicating priests" (*sacerdotes concubinarii* or *fornicarii*). He attacks, then, women who abandon themselves to monks and to curates (*vos mulieres, quae datis corpus vestrum curialibus, monachis, presbyteris*. Sermon 36). He curses those who keep girls and still celebrate mass (*ecclesiasticis tenentibus meretrices publicas et celebrantibus*. Sermon 20); those who make presents to their prostitutes (*certe credo quod libenter enim dant meretricibus*. Sermon 57); those who give chains of gold and trailing robes to their penitents, which the latter earn in the sweat of their bodies (Sermon 39.); those who make of their clerks vile agents of Prostitution; those who, at their banquets, indulge in obscene remarks; those who concern themselves with the dowries of marriageable girls; those, finally, who commit all sorts of abominations.

Michel Menot is not less explicit regarding the disorderly lives of ecclesiastics. He forbids the giving of the Eucharist to the servant maids of priests who are no more than the latter's concubines. He pictures these girls seduced by the priests, who put them under lock and key (*est filia seducta quae fruit per annum reclusa cum sacerdote cum poto et cochleari*, or in French, à *pot et à cuiller*). "He also says in some places," reports Henri Estienne, "that when the gendarmes enter the villages, the first thing they seek out is the whore (*putain*) of the curate or the vicar; and that with regard to prelates it would be well to sound a warning from one end of the city to the other: 'Guard well your front parts, madame or mademoiselle!' for, in addition to keeping girls in their houses, they have their agents (*chalandes*) in all parts of the city; but they take a particular pleasure in making cuckolds of their parishioners. And the odd thing is that it is always necessary for the great houses to have a prelate for godfather; so that it frequently happens that the husband takes for godfather the one who is in reality the father, without knowing anything about it." The preachers speak with more reserve of the dissolute manners of certain

convents of women; but they say enough to enable us to divine that Prostitution was sometimes hidden there. "Theodoric of Niem," says Dulaure, in his *Histoire de Paris*, "informs us that the convents of the religious were species of seraglios for the use of the bishops and the monks; that the result of this was many children who were reared as monks; that some religious committed abortions, while others slew their infants, etc." (*Nemoris Unionis Tractatus*, VI, Chapter 34.) Olivier Maillard had reason to exclaim: "May we have ears good enough to hear the voices of little children cast into the latrines or into the rivers!"

The demoralization must have been very great, since Maillard did not dare to express himself openly regarding incests and other "sins of lechery" (*péchés de paillardise*) with which he reproaches his age: *Taceo de adulteriis, stupris et incestibus et peccatis contra naturam*. Gabriel Barletta, who was in a manner but the echo in Italy of Maillard and Menot in France, is less reserved on this point, since he is speaking to Italians: "Oh, how many sodomites, oh, how many ribalds!" (*O quot sodomitae o quot ribaldi!*) cried Barletta, who did not hesitate to become technical on this frightful subject: *Hoc impedimento impedit diabolus linguam sodomitae, qui cum pueris rem turpem agit, O naturae destructor! impeditur ille qui cum uxore non agit per rectam lineam; impeditur qui cum bestiis rem agit per rectam lineam; impeditur qui cum bestiis rem agit turpem*. Barletta must have found a certain pleasure in the thing, since he plays upon the word *carnalitates*, from which he coins *cardinalitates*, by allusion to the cardinals, whom he especially accuses of these turpitudes. Maillard endeavors also to correct the errors of the flesh, *ad domandum carnis vitia*; but he does not attack in detail these sins of lust; he merely reproaches the ribalds with living like swine (*vos. meretrices et paillardi, quivivitis sicut porci*. Sermon 57). He is ashamed of his century, and occasionally he turns away his eyes in disgust, crying: "O my God, I do not believe that, since the incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ, lust has ever before reigned in the world as it now reigns at Paris!"

One might with certitude say that the progress of Prostitution was the immediate result of luxury, of coquetry and of vanity. The women were the instigators of vice, and there was soon a general traffic in debauchery to pay the expenses of a fashionable toilet. "Perhaps, you will say, Ladies," cried Menot, pointing a finger at them, "you will say: 'our husbands do not give us such dresses but we earn them in

the sweat of our bodies!' To a thousand devils with such labor as that!' The history of manners shows us that from all times there has existed a proportional relation between luxury and Prostitution. "Lust and luxury are brother and sister," said the little Father André, in one of his merry-reading sermons.

CHAPTER LXVII

THE court of France had formerly been, according to an old expression, "the sign of the people's manners;" it was the court which served as a model for evil, as well as for good. It was it which, by its example, corrupted or purified public morals. The commonalty (*commun*), which was the term then given to everything outside the nobility, had its eyes fixed always upon the conduct of the great and held it a point of honor to imitate the latter in all things, in order to be as like as possible to the privileged caste. Prostitution had no sooner made its appearance at the court than it was to be seen brazenly parading in the city. This is why the most dissolute periods were always those in which the license and depravity of the court exerted the sorriest influence over the manners of the country.

We can understand what rigorous watch the sovereign always had to maintain over the decency and the chastity of his household, for he in a manner was responsible for those scandals which had so unfortunate a result, since the citizens seemed bent upon copying those vices of which they were the witnesses. Sometimes, it is true, calumny, always ardently prompt to spread its venom over everything that glittered, would unjustly attack reputations that were irreproachable; but if this was sufficient to inspire the malice of the mob, it was not sufficient to justify the latter in hurling itself into those excesses which it condemned as shameful exceptions. Thus, at the court of Louis IX; where manners were as regular as the rigidity of the holy King could make them, calumny had dared to attack the good renown of the King's own mother; and yet, it was not Thibaut, Count of Champagne, who thus brought a smirch to the reputation of Queen Blanche of Castile. It is well known that the passion of the gentle Count of Champagne did not in any wise prejudice the conjugal honor of King Louis VIII; it was, on the part of the Count, an *affaire de trouverè*; he had chosen Queen Blanche for his lady, and he composed in her honor amorous songs, which he caused to be written upon the walls of his castles at Troyes and in Provence, and which he himself sang to his own accompaniment; but this was as far as the thing went, and the people knew it well enough. But Queen Blanche, however pious and however austere she may have been, was reported to have had

relations less innocent with the Cardinal Romain, Papal Legate in France. And so, the scholars of the University of Paris, who had cause to complain of the intervention of the court of Rome and the ecclesiastical authorities in their quarrels, took vengeance on the Legate by putting him into a leonine distich, which Mathieu Paris has preserved for us in his Chronicle:

Heul morimur strati, vincti, mersi, spoliati!
*Mentula Legati nos facit ista pati!**

The supposed amours of the Legate with Blanche of Castile had no other moral effect upon the populace (*populaire*), which witnessed an imposing contrast in the *prudhomme* of the young king, the severity of his laws (*établissements*) and the school of virtue which he made of his entourage.

Under the successors of Louis IX, the court of France preserved the traditions of decency which it owed especially to the reign of this pious monarch. The different Kings who succeeded him, from Philip the Bold to Charles V, made it a point of honor, according to an old and consecrated expression, not to soil the brilliant purity of the lily; they were, if not austere in their morals, at least very rigid with regard to the manners of their court. Thus, as we have seen, Philip the Handsome did not spare his three sisters-in-law, the heroines of the Tower of Nesle, and their imprisonment, which undoubtedly followed a trial behind closed doors, proved to the people that the mantle bearing the fleur-de-lis was not meant to cover the shame of Prostitution. Philip the Handsome, thus, at the expense of his own family, satisfied the moral sentiments of his subjects, who preserved the memory of the horrible debauches of Marguerite of Burgundy in a song, the refrain of which has come down to our day in the mouths of nurses and children. The story was that the scholars, who passed in front of the Tower of Nesle in order to betake themselves to the Preaux-Clercs, the ordinary scene of their promenades and their pleasures, would sing in a deep voice: *La tour, prends garde de te laisser abattre!* ("There is the Tower; don't let yourself be seduced!") And yet this tower, which had been the scene of the orgies of princesses, or of a single one whom history has not clearly distinguished among the three, was not torn down till the middle of the seventeenth century.

**Translator's Note:*—"Alas, we die, prostrate, conquered, submerged and stripped! It is a legate's *mentula* that has caused us to suffer all this."

The court of Charles V was not less commendable than that of St. Louis, and it may be supposed that it exerted a salutary influence over public manners; for not only had the wise King taken care to cultivate those virtues which came from *noblesse de courage*, but he also desired that the ladies of Paris should have frequent contact with the ladies of the court, in order that they might thus become more perfect through virtuous emulation. Christine de Pisan says that the *femmes d'estate* of Paris were sent to the hôtel Saint-Pol, when the King or the Queen held full court (*cour plénière*) there; the Queen, who was beautiful, virtuous and gracious, received them courteously; there was dancing, singing and joyous cheer, but everthing that took place was done with an eye to "the honor and reverence of the King." The historian of the "deeds and good manners" of Charles V reminds us that from nobility of heart are born good manners and virtuous actions, the conquest of bad habits and "villainous works" (*oeuvres vilaines*), abundance of grace, praise, honor, love, courtesy, charity, peace and tranquility.

But upon the death of the King, the aspect of the court changed suddenly, as though modesty and chastity had followed Charles V to the tomb. The young King Charles VI and especially his brother Louis, Duke of Orleans, were impatient in the pursuit of pleasure, and they received only too much encouragement in their debauched inclinations from their four uncles, the Dukes of Anjou, of Bourbon, of Burgundy, and of Berry, who had borne with constraint the moral tyranny of their virtuous brother. All the historians are in agreement in saying that Prostitution appears to have been unchanged at the court of France following the marriage of Charles VI with Isabeau of Bavaria. We have already spoken of the frightful disorders which marked the famous tournament of Saint-Denis in 1389. "These jousts," according to the picturesque expressions of a contemporary, "became tournaments of lubricity (*lubrica facta sunt*)."

On the last night of the fête, everybody was masked, and this masquerade led to strange behavior; this began with indecent postures and ended in acts of debauchery, and if we are to believe the chronicler, there was barely a single person who was not called upon to satisfy "the women and girls as well as men." It was, it is said, at the height of this occasion that the Duke of Orleans met under masks Isabeau of Bavaria, wife of his brother, the King, and Marguerite of Bavaria, wife of his cousin, John of Burgandy. "And it was common report," says Jean

Juvenal des Ursins, in his *Histoire de Charles VI*, "that the said jousts were accompanied by indecent things in the matter of amours, and that many evils came from them."

The Duke of Orleans was a debauchee who was tireless in seducing all the women whom he desired. He did not limit himself to the great ladies; he abducted those of low condition and won their favors by flattery or force. Du Haillan relates that this Prince had in his town-house a room wholly filled with portraits of his mistresses; the portrait of Isabeau of Bavaria was to be found beside that of her relative, Marguerite of Bavaria, Duchess of Burgundy. The Duke, Jean-Sans-Peur, entered this room, and there saw the portrait of his wife. He swore to be revenged, and a short time after, he assassinated the Duke of Orleans, a few paces from his hotel, in the rue Barbette.* Louis of Orleans, despite the fact that he had a wife worthy of all affection and respect, the beautiful and gracious Valentine of Milan, whose reputation had been tarnished by no cloud whatever, was a constant participant in the tournaments of pleasure (*ebattements and folâtreries*) of the court. In this, he was only too well seconded by the Queen, whom he had debauched, and who debauched many others in her turn. Masquerades were then the principal divertisement of the court, and those who took part in them, "in masks and in dissolute habits," had recourse to this disguise in order to "play at amours" (*jouir de leurs amours*). A masquerade of this sort, at the carnival of 1393, ended in so sinister a manner that the companions of the King in his debauchery saw in it a warning from Heaven, and were converted from their sins for a number of days.

This terrible *ballet des ardents* has cast, as it were, a somber glow over the whole reign of Charles VI, who fell into madness following the event. This was a ball which was given at the hôtel Saint-Pol, in honor of the marriage of a lady of honor of the Queen. The bride had already had three husbands, and according to an old and widespread custom in France, this widow who was flying to her fourth marriage bed had to be given a charivari. "It is a ridiculous custom," says the anonymous chronicler of Saint-Denis, "and one contrary to all law of decency and honor."** Nevertheless, one did honor to an old rite

*Translator's Note:—Compare Balzac's conte *La Fausse Courtizane* (J. U. N.).

**A custom which still exists in rural portions of the United States, the word being commonly corrupted to "shivaree." The bedroom peeking is replaced with noise, equally obscene—tin pans, etc.† Cf., also the rice, old shoes, *et al.*

†(J. U. N.'s Note:) As to the "bedroom peeking being replaced with noise," I very

by disguising oneself in immodest habits and masks, and by pursuing with obscene words (*ignominiosa verba*) the bride and bridegroom, who had to endure any number of insults. The King and five lords of his court were participants this time in the charivari; they clothed themselves from head to foot in a close-fitting linen costume smeared with oakum and pitch; they then entered the room with horrible cries, running in from all sides with indecent gestures; following which, they danced the Saracen in a furious and demoniacal fashion. The Duke of Orleans took a torch and hurled it at the devils, which set them all on fire at once; they were chained one to another, and all were burned alive, with the exception of the King, who succeeded in breaking his chains, and who took hiding under the robes of the Duchess of Berry. The chronicler draws a frightful picture of the death of these unfortunate ones. "The fire," he says, "consumed also the interior portions of their bodies and their virile members (*genitalia cum virgis virilibus frustatim cadentia*), which fell in shreds, flooding with blood the floor of the drawing-room." (Translation of M. Bellaguet: *Chron. du Religieux de Saint-Denis*, Volume II, page 69.) Charles VI was miraculously saved, and thanked God for it in a solemn procession, in which the Princes went with naked feet from the porte Montmartre to Notre-Dame.

The King's malady suspended the fêtes but not the disorderly carryings-on of the court. The Queen and her lover, the Duke of Orleans, protected the disorderly and assured them impunity. However, as a tribute to public indignation, exemplary justice was done on two Augustinian monks, who had been brought to court to cure the King, and who had not succeeded in keeping their promise; these monks had defiled the royal hotel of Tournesles, where they had been lodged, by indulging in a traffic with infamous lenons (*per lenones infames*): they had brought dishonor into families and had committed continual adulteries which were paid for with the King's money. These hypocrites were degraded, after having confessed their turpitudes, and were decapitated in the Place de Grève. They found an avenger in a monk of their order named Jacques Legrand (*Jacobus Magnus*), who came to preach before the Queen three or four years later: "I desire," he said, "to say, noble Queen, nothing which shall

well remember, as a boy in Kansas, that the actual peeking was indulged in, led on by the brother of the bride. A common jest, also, was to present to the wedded pair a *pot de chambre* filled with cider and doughnuts.

not be agreeable to you; but your health is dearer to me than your good graces and so I shall speak the truth. The goddess Venus alone reigns in your court; Drunkenness and Debauchery (*commessatio*) serve her as a train and turn night into day with the most dissolute dances. These accursed and infernal followers, who incessantly besiege your court, do but corrupt manners and enervate hearts." Passing on then to the question of luxurious vestments, which the Queen had been responsible for introducing, he censured these energetically: "Everywhere, noble Queen," he cried with vehemence, "there is talk of these disorders, and of many others which dishonor your court. If you do not believe me, run through the city in the guise of a poor woman, and you shall hear what everyone is saying!"

Isabeau of Bavaria found it difficult to conceal her anger, while the ladies of her train approached the preacher and told him they were astonished at his audacity. "And I," replied Jacques Legrand, "I am a good deal more astonished that you dare to commit so many evil actions and even worse ones, which I shall reveal in full to the Queen, when it shall please her to hear me!" One of the officers of the Queen wanted to shut the mouth of this insolent friar. "If you take my advice," he said, "you will hurl this miserable wretch into the river."—"Yes, undoubtedly," replied the monk boldly, "it would only take a King as wicked as you are to prescribe such a crime." The King appeared to be highly satisfied with the severe remonstrances which the furious preacher had addressed to Isabeau, but he himself never interfered but once in the Queen's scandalous gallantries; that was in 1419, a few years before his death, when he had judgment and execution performed upon the Chevalier Louis de Bourdon, who was looked upon as being the favored lover of "Madame Isabeau," as the people said. "The Queen," relates the chronicler, "had summoned a great number of men of arms, whom she placed under the command of the Sires de Graille, De Giac and De Bourdon. These gentlemen whose special duty it was to watch night and day over her safety, as well as over that of the ladies of the court, indulged in conduct unworthy of their nobility. Enriched by the Queen's benefices, they had no fear of trampling under foot the honor of Knighthood, and with the aid of their procurers (*lenonum nutibus continuatis et blanditiis impudicis*), they had succeeded in seducing certain ladies of high condition. These adulterous relations, in which they indulged incessantly and unblushingly, even during Holy Week,

had aroused the indignation of the great ones of the court, who counselled the King to make an example of them. This was why Louis de Bourdon* was arrested and imprisoned in the tower of Montlhéry, then brought back to Paris and secretly drowned at night in the Seine, to stop the mouths of the people regarding his crime (*ne super ejus scelere vulgus amplius loqueretur*).

Charles VI, in the first years of his reign, had had mistresses by the score (*à la foule*) who had disputed the royal preference. The Maréchal de Boucicaut says, on this point, that "the sight of so many nobles and fine ladies aroused the courage and the desire to be amorous." But from the day the King fell insane, physicians began to restrain him from abusing his physical strength, and to remove from him all occasions for squandering his prodigious erotic ardor. The Queen, under these delicate circumstances, refused her conjugal duties to the poor demented King, and would escape from his bed or would repel with disdain the caresses of her spouse; the latter, furious and outraged, would occasionally permit himself to strike her. It was to relieve these connubial exigencies that Madame Isabeau conceived the idea of selecting a victim who would lend herself without resistance to the King's good pleasure. This victim was named Odette de Champeivers; she was probably of good family, and the people, who pitied her, without casting any shame upon her for the rôle which she had accepted, nicknamed her the "little Queen," Odette slept at the foot of the King's bed, and when she would hear the beginning of the *riote* between Charles VI and his wife, she would glide into the royal couch while Isabeau of Bavaria left it. The King did not appear to perceive that he had by his side another woman than the Queen; but he ceased his beatings, and he would sometimes recover his reason in the arms of the "little Queen." The latter employed her influence with the unhappy King to force him to change his linen and to submit to the necessary and proper ablutions.

It has been supposed, with some appearance of probability, that the King's insanity was the natural consequence of the excesses of which he had been guilty in his youth; and yet, his brother, the Duke of Orleans, who had had "as many mistresses as there are days in the year," to make use of the picturesque expression of the lower classes at this time, never displayed any symptoms of madness. He did not

*Translator's Note:—Julien de Boys—Bourredon (Balzac's conte, *La Connestable*) (J. U. N.).

pride himself, however, on being a model of prudence and of reason, but permitted himself *gâtés* which bore witness to his debauched imagination. Sauval, in his *Amours des Rois de France*, has related the adventure of the lady of Canny as a proof of the degeneracy of manners at the court of Charles VI; but we do not know the original source from which the historian of the *Antiquités de Paris* has drawn his tale, and it is our opinion that tradition has furnished at least the details of this story. The Duke of Orleans was passionately in love with the Dame de Canny; the husband of this lady suspected nothing of this intrigue, which, however, was the talk of all, not only at court, but also among the populace. One morning, the Duke and his mistress, who had spent the night together, heard the voice of the Sire de Canny, demanding audience with the Prince. The latter ordered that the husband be admitted; but not until he had covered the lady's face with the bedclothes. The Sire de Canny, having been brought in, the Duke offered to show him the most beautiful body he had ever seen, on condition he would not seek to know the person who was in the bed. Thereupon, Louis of Orleans uncovered this lady, who was wholly naked, and permitted the poor husband to view her at his ease, to admire her most secret beauties, and even to touch them, in order better to appreciate what they were worth. Canny was charmed with what he saw; his admiration was expressed with a warmth which caused the Duke of Orleans to laugh till he cried. There was also laughter under the covers. The following night the Sire de Canny, sharing his wife's bed, was tireless in describing to his wife what he had seen, while the lady laughed at the transports which she did not dare to boast of having inspired. She laughed over the matter again the following day with her lover. All the court was diverted by the adventure, which was a mystery only for the deceived and cuckold (*coquard*) husband.*

The court of Charles VII, at least in the beginning, did not differ from that of his father; the King was even more ardent in the pursuit of pleasure than Charles VI had even been; but pleasure, as he understood it, consisted less in licentious orgies than in gallantries and in "light joustings" (*folâtres ébattements*); this was true Chivalry, although at once more refined and more relaxed than that of the century preceding. The King did not set an example of debauchery for his

*Translator's Note:—Evidently, then, this is the basis for Balzac's conte, *D'un justiciard* (J. U. N.).

courtiers, for he understood the love of ladies in the same fashion as the Knights of old, and he accompanied this "perfect love" (*parfait amour*) with tourneys, jousts, *emprises* and knightly festivals. The English were the masters of his realm, and the King of England reigned at Paris, while Charles VII in his little court of Bourges, dreamed only of breaking lances for the honor of fair ladies, of reading romances, of dancing to *chansons* and of hunting *au bol et a courre*. He had a mistress, and he never had any other after he had once fallen hopelessly in love with her. The beautiful Agnès Sorel had been attached at first to the house of Queen Marie of Anjou, and during the first five years the *demoiselle de Fromenteau*, as she was known at court, passed with the Queen, it was not generally known that she had captivated the King's heart. This secret was revealed by the favor which the Sorel or Soreau family suddenly came to enjoy and by the "great and excessive trappings of silk-lined robes, of collars of gold, and of precious stones" which this young lady did not fear to wear at the public ceremonies, where she eclipsed by the luxury of her toilet the noblest of dames. Then, says Monstrelet in his *Chronicle*, "it was commonly reported that the King kept her in concubinage." Agnès Sorel would appear to have been pretty rather than beautiful, seductive rather than imposing; her character was playful and her conversation diverting (*lepida et faceta*, says the chronicler, Gaguin). The passion of Charles VII for the pretty Agnès, was then, not unworthy of a King of France, if we consider the fact that it was this passion alone which decided the "little King of Bourges" to reconquer his crown and to expel the English from France. One day when Charles was consulting an astrologer regarding Agnès' destiny, the astrologer replied that this beautiful young lady had been long loved by a great and powerful monarch. At once Agnès arose and saluted the King: "Sire," she said to him gravely, "I supplicate you to permit me to fly to the court of King Henry, for I must fulfill my destiny. It is the English King whom this prediction orders me to serve, and he is also the true King of France, while you are barely the King of Bourges." Charles VII was struck with the justice of this reproach, coming to him from so beautiful a mouth; he was ashamed of his abasement, and to please Agnès, and in order to be esteemed by her, he took no repose until France had been delivered from the oppression of the English, and until he had been crowned at Rheims.

The service which Agnès had rendered the royal lily and France

deserved to efface whatever was illegitimate in her liaison with Charles VII. Francis I sought to restore the memory of Agnès by means of this quatrain, which is an historic document in support of tradition;

*Gentille Agnès, plus d'honneur tu mérites,
La cause étant la France recouvrer,
Que ce que peut dedans un cloistre ouvrir
Close nonnain ou bien devot hermite.**

But the opinion of contemporaries was not so favorable to the pretty Agnès, who was unable, whatever she may have been, to escape the abjectness of a prostitute from the point of view of public morality. When she appeared in public, a crowd would gather about her, and she was not spared disdainful looks, mocking remarks and threatening insults. She came just once to Paris, towards the end of April, 1448, and she left it a few days afterwards, saying that the Parisians "were but villains, and that had she known that she would be given no greater honor than that, she would never have set foot in the town." The Bourgeois de Paris, who has reported in his *Journal* the arrival of Agnès at Paris, reports that "the saying is that she is loved publicly by the King of France, without faith and without law, and without truth to the good Queen whom he has espoused; and it soon appeared that she kept as great state as a countess or a duchess, and she often went and came with the good Queen, without being ashamed of her sin, for which the Queen had much sorrow in her heart." Charles VII respected public opinion enough not to avow openly the adulterous relations which had existed for eighteen or nineteen years between himself and Agnès, he had had by her four daughters, of whom three lived and bore the title "of France" like the King's legitimate children; upon the birth of the first of these four daughters, who died a few days afterward, "Agnès," says Monstrelet, "declared that the child was the King's and gave her to him openly as heir apparent; but the King always excused himself and did not recognize the claim. She might well have got it elsewhere." But Charles VII recognized his three other bastards, who were well

**Translator's Note:—*

Gentle Agnes, more honor without doubt
Belongs to you, the cause being our dear France,
Than in a cloister any pious nun, by chance,
Or hermit might win, no matter how devout.

provided for and well married during the reign of Louis XI. It may be believed, however, that in their father's lifetime they had not appeared at court, and that their birth was somewhat ignored, since historians like Jean Chartier and Enguerrand de Monstrelet have dared to maintain that there was nothing more innocent than the liaison of Agnès Sorel and the King: "The love which the King showed her," says Monstrelet, "was not on account of the sportiveness, joyousness and well polished language which was hers." If Charles VII refrained from an official mistress, this sentiment of modesty on his part proves that he felt the necessity of the King's setting an example of good manners, and that he did not want his court to be set down as a den of Prostitution. We may deduce from this that the manners of this court had mended, especially during the last years of the King's lifetime, the monarch becoming as he grew older, sorrowful, morose and solitary.

The people of Paris always remembered with horror the *Ballet des Ardents* and the obscene masquerades which had taken place in the dwellings of the King, Queen and the Princes; the public undoubtedly had conceived a wholly exaggerated idea of these courtly pastimes, for it saw, in the evils which desolated the reign of Charles VI, a punishment for the impieties and the infamies which this unfortunate King had authorized by his example. It is likely enough that the masquerades at this period were not merely disguises invented for the pleasure of the eyes; these disguises always had some unusual characteristic: sometimes certain parts of the body which modesty bids should be hidden, were placed in evidence, but not openly revealed; sometimes the mask itself presented, in place of the human physiognomy, the monstrous attributes of the masculine sex; sometimes the *marotte* or *momon*, which was inseparable from the mask, would represent a priapic figure; sometimes the draperies with which the *porteur de momon* was covered were all variegated with images of indecent devices. This was not all; these *dissimulated* and *dissolute* trappings were, for the men who made use of them, means of satisfying their passions without being recognized; as a result, women were violated or insulted. The amorous who were at the same time intelligent made use of these masks and travesties to enable them to communicate with each other and to obtain privacy under the eyes of a father or a mother, of a husband or a wife, in the presence of all the court. It was not, however, the court which had conceived these

masquerades; the court had done no more than imitate the *Fête des Fous*, which was celebrated in the Middle Ages in the majority of the churches and convents of Christendom, and which was the direct and lineal descendent of the Saturnalia of paganism. This Feast of Fools had not yet disappeared in the fifteenth century, despite the efforts of the episcopacy, which had endeavored in vain to destroy it ever since the establishment of the Christian religion among the Gauls. Gregory of Tours, in his *Histoire de France*, (Book X, Chapter 16), mentions an episcopal decree rendered against the religious of Poitiers who had celebrated the *barbatoires*. This was the name given to the Feast of Fools, on account of the bearded hideous and fantastic masks with which the actors covered their faces. "The first of January, on the day of the Circumcision, the Cathedral of Paris was invaded by a multitude of masked folk, who profaned it with immodest dances, forbidden games, infamous songs, sacrilegious buffooneries and countless excesses of every sort, even to the point of bloodshed. The priests and the clerics were the instigators and the accomplices of these scandalous masquerades, which spread through the streets and brought disorder into all the city." (See, in *Le Moyen Age et la Renaissance*, the chapter on the *Fête des Fous* by P. Lacroix.*) The bishop Eudes de Sully was forced to threaten with excommunication anyone, priest or layman, who should take part in these shameful orgies, which were renewed every year under the name of *Liberté de Décembre*; but the Feast of Fools was only celebrated with all the more fury in the Church. It was finally necessary for the civil to come to the aid of the ecclesiastical authorities, by way of putting a stop to, or rather restricting excesses which were not limited to the election of a pope or a bishop of the Fools, by those who were called his "subjects," and who submitted to his joyous prescriptions during the whole duration of his mad reign. And yet, this Feast of Fools, so varied in its names, in its customs and its burlesque liturgy, was not definitely suppressed in France until the middle of the seventeenth century.**

The people took a singular pleasure in the grotesque shows (*montres*) which were the obligatory accessories of all these carnival-like festivals; the people always loved the extraordinary and they would quit labor and business in order to see a cavalcade of bizarrely clad and

*Translator's Note:—Our author.

**Translator's Note:—Cf., the *Mardi Gras* still celebrated in New Orleans, and celebrated there, so late as 1907, exactly as our author here describes the *Fête des Fous*.

masked men passing in the street. If the police had not intervened in the interest of public order, the masks and travesties would have multiplied along with the crimes and disorders which they only too greatly favored. Kings and parliaments issued numerous edicts to forbid them. We may form an idea of the indecencies which were committed under pretense of these masquerades by reading the following passage from Sauval: "By the end of the year (December, 1502), the maskers no longer ran about the streets disguised as fools, holding in their hands sticks stuffed with straw or hair and shaped like priapi, with which they struck all whom they met in their path." (*Antiq. de Paris*, Book XII, page 651.)

One of the most licentious variations of the Feast of Fools was established in the fourteenth century in Normandy, notably at Evreux and at Rouen; the *gens de Conardie*, brothers of St. Barnabas, elected a chief called the *abbé des Conards*, who visited his States mounted upon an ass, clad in a tasseled monk's hood, brandishing his *marotte* like a scepter, and surrounded by his *conards*. This *abbé des Conards* called before his tribunal all smutty cases, pronounced decrees in matters *conardantes* and drew his arguments from the celebrated *Evangile des Connoilles*, an old and naïve repertory of indecent puns and free-going aphorisms. The obscene abbot kept his ribald jurisdiction in the city of Rouen down to the end of the sixteenth century, at which time he still made a *show* of his subjects, whom he called *conards* and not *cornards*, in accordance with an attempt which had been made to rechristen them for the sake of an indecent etymology; his subjects were not offended at being called *Innocents* by decent folk, who feared to soil their mouths with a grosser word. Conard (Conardus) was synonymous with *silly* or *foolish* (*stultus* and *fatuus*; French, *sot* and *fou*); but this villainous synonym, which carried with it the stigma of its popular origin, is naturally explained by a proverb which the author of the *Moyen de Parvenir* has not failed to record in that old storehouse of Gallic wit: one said then, and one still says today, it may be, in the filthy language of the servant hall: *sot comme un c. . . .* (silly as a c. . . .).

This extravagance of the Innocents, or of the *Conards*, had undoubtedly given birth in France to a very impertinent custom, common among the highest nobility as among the common people during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It is only the poets and the raconteurs who make allusion to this custom; but from the off-hand

manner in which they speak of it, we may believe that there was no objection to it. Following is the way in which the Abbé de Lenglet-Dufresnoy in his *Notes on the Words of Clément Marot* (12 mo. edition, Volume III, page 97), explains the custom in question: "Those young persons who are surprised in bed on the Innocents' day (28th of December) receive upon their behinds a few whacks, and sometimes a little bit more, when the subject is worth the pains. This is no longer practiced today: we are a good deal wiser and a good deal more reserved than our fathers." Lenglet-Dufresnoy wrote this in 1730 or 1731; and fifty years before, the word if not the custom was still in vogue, for we read in Richelet's *Dictionary of the French Language*: "*Donner les innocents à quescum (Aliquem virgis exseipere)*, that is to say, to give them to him upon his rump on the day of the Innocents, and that merely for the sake of a laugh." Clément Marot, in an epigram which has called forth a rather free note from his editor, gives us to understand that the Innocents' day was often but an innocent pretext leading to a result which was not so innocent.

*Très-chère souer, si je scavois où couche
Votre personne au jour des Innocents,
De bon matin je yrois à vostre couche
Veoir ce corps gent, que j'aime entre cinq cens.
Adonc, ma main, vu l'ardeur que je sens,*

*Ne se pourroit bonnement contenter,
Sans vous toucher, tenir, taster, tenter,
Et si quelcum survenoit d'avanture,
Semblant ferois de vous innocenter:
Seroit-ce pas honneste couverture?**

The "very dear sister" to whom Clément Marot addresses himself with so much familiarity, was none other, if we are to believe tradition

*Translator's Note:—

My sister very dear, if I knew where
You sleep upon the Holy Innocents' Day,
I should come early in the morning there
And with that body, loved above five-hundred, play.
Already, my hand, it seems, knows what I say,

For it will not keep still; nothing will do
But touching, holding, tasting, tempting you;
And if some one should come by chance and flick
You on the rump, pretending pastime true,
Would not that be a very honest trick?

and the commentators, than Marguerite de Marguerites, sister of Francis I, the beautiful and seductive Queen of Navarre.* We may deduce from this that the sport of Innocents' day as it was played at court took little account of etiquette. This sport preserved appearances and concealed its mysteries under a "decent covering" (*honête couverte*), according to the Marotic expression. Brantôme, in his *Dames Galantes*, cites on this head a great lady who was esteemed for forty years as "the best woman of the country and the court," and who, "being a widow, came to be amorous of a young gentleman, and not being able to come at him, on Innocents' day, went to his room to give him the sport; but the gentleman gave it to her very readily, and made use of something else besides rods."

It is easy to appreciate the state of moral depravity into which the court of France had fallen, in adopting such customs, which had sprung up among the people; but we shall soon see that this depravity was carried still further, during the reign of the Valois, when Italian manners began coming in at the court with Catherine de Medici. Moreover, the game of Innocents' day was not the filthiest of those which were played by the ladies of honor to the Queen. These young ladies found themselves, from their early years, in a dangerous school of gallantry, and one which naturally led to Prostitution. They were spared indecent spectacles no more than they were obscene words. The imagination of these young women was constantly confronted with a multitude of the crudest and grossest *joyeusetés* in the world; everything which Gallic liberty, masculine or feminine, had created in the way of facetious *rencontres*, libertine equivocations, brazen word-plays and laughable stories was passed from mouth to mouth in the conversations of the court. We should not dare, for example, to extract from the *Advineaux Amoureux* those audacious enigmas which were given for solving to the ladies of the court of Burgundy. It is necessary to read the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles du Bon Roi Louis XI* in order to form an idea of the demoralization of the court of France in the fifteenth century;** but another custom, more impudent perhaps than the sport of Innocents, a sport everywhere received and authorized, among kings as among beggars, will give us an even better idea of the degree of relaxation at which public morality had arrived.

*Translator's Note:—This is one of the author's many downright slanders.

**Translator's Note:—De Balzac's conte, *Joyeusetés du Roy Loys Le Unziesme* (J. U. N.).

Every marriage, even that of a prince, was an occasion for a scandalous comedy, which would hardly have been pardonable in a savage land or in a Court of Miracles.

As soon as the newly wedded pair had entered the nuptial chamber, all those who had assisted at the wedding, young and old, foolish and wise, gathered together and set themselves to see and hear all that took place between the two.* This was not, as with the ancients, a case of children scattering nuts and singing: Hymen! O! Hymenee! This was a general conspiracy, the object of which was to betray the mysteries of the conjugal couch. Some glued their eyes to the cracks of the door, while others spied at the windows; some made a hole through the wall, while others pierced the ceiling. The object was not merely to learn the secrets of the marital couch; it frequently was to deprive the pair of the courage to be themselves. Whatever might be surprised by the eyes of those Arguses fed the curiosity and the malice of these *gens de la noce*. It is easy to understand how this custom had come to be established in the country, among peasants endowed with little delicacy, but it is surprising to find it at the court, more widespread than anywhere else. It was a sort of tribute which the married pair paid to the libertinism of their friends. Each cry, each complaint of the bride, would provoke on the part of the audience, a storm of bravoes in honor of the husband.**

Clément Marot, who assisted at the marriage of Madame Renée of France, daughter of King Louis XII, to the Duke of Ferrara, in July, 1528, makes allusion to this custom, from which the Princess, undoubtedly, was not exempt. He informs us, in his *Chant Nuptial*, that the ladies were not less curious than the men regarding the episodes of a wedding night.

*Vous qui soupez, laissez ce tables grasses:
Le manger peu vaut mieux pour bien danser,
Sus, ausmosniers, dictes vistement Graces;
Le mari dict qu'il se faut avancer.*

*Translator's Note:—Cf., the actions of Garcilla and the author of the *Satyricon* in peeping at the Catamite who is taken in mock marriage by a girl (J. U. N.).

**Translator's Note:—Cf. the mediaeval "Droit du Seigneur" in which the husband was sometimes peeper to his wife's defloration. This custom, which dates from patriarchal times, was not universal in Europe, for which reason our author may have seen fit to discredit, or at least, to ignore it. But that it did exist as a theoretical right sometimes practised, is unquestionable. See, in this connection, my *Drums of Yle*, Covici, Chicago, 1925. (J. U. N.).

*Le jour luy fasche, on le peut bien penser.
 Dansez, dansez! et que l'on se deporté,
 Si m'en croyez, d'escouter a la porte
 S'il donnera l'assault sur la my-nuict.
 Chaut appetit en tels lieux se transporte:
 Dangereuse est la bien heureuse nuict.**

It was probably as dangerous for the ladies and young ladies who went there to seek special instructions as it was for the bride, although the latter played a rôle all the more difficult for the reason that each one of her words was repeated by malicious echoes. We should not be astonished, after all this, at the multitude of *contes gras*, *epigrammes plaisantes* and *bon mots* which the *nuît bien heureuse* furnished our fathers. All these stories, gross or naïve, were taken as facts; they were collected with particular care and constituted the ordinary material of conversation on the day after a wedding night. Brantôme has not forgotten this chapter in his *Dames Galantes*, where it is said that on the bridal evening "each one was at the keyhole, according to custom."

This day or night, where everything took place, as it were, before witnesses, in the manner of the marriage contract, must have been sufficiently terrifying for the newly wed. The great thing was not to make a misstep, according to the saying of a clever lady who had experienced the hazards and perils of the situation. The husband frequently played rather a crude game, for it behooved him, in a manner, to make proof of his wife's virginity. The latter might be very embarrassed at being forced to appear what she was not, and sometimes it was necessary to make very painful confessions; but as Brantôme says, "there are a hundred other remedies which are better, such as those gentlemen the physicians, scholars and expert apothecaries know so well how to order, invent and apply." Following is one

**Translator's Note:—*

You who still sup, come, leave the laden table;
 The less you eat, the better you will dance.
 Up, almoners, you Graces of old fable,
 The husband says it is time now to advance.
 He's tired of day; he longs to hurl a lance.
 Then dance! dance! dance often and yet more,
 Till the time comes to listen at the door
 While he makes the assault without a light.
 Our appetites are gone; then to the chore:
 Oh, dangerous is that very happy night.

of these remedies which Brantôme had learned of from a practitioner: "it is necessary to have blood suckers and put them to do the work of nature, to draw and suck the blood; the said blood suckers in sucking, leave and engender small ampules and fistulas filled with blood, in so likely a fashion that the gallant husband, who comes to the assault upon the wedding night, breaks these ampules, from which the blood gushes out, he and she being both all bloody, which is a great joy to one and to the other, and thus the *honor della cittadella è salvo*." Brantôme, in the chapter on cuckolds, enters into still more technical details, which are not out of place in his *Dames Galantes*, although they belong essentially to the history of Prostitution.

However, we have said enough on this ticklish subject, to give an idea of the state of manners in a society which did not even respect the institution which was its own holiest and firmest base, not even at the moment when the priest came to bless the nuptial bed. It may be asked what sort of innocence girls could possess who had been, before the age of puberty, initiated into those secrets which marriage could no longer teach them, and who found themselves subjected to this species of obscene pillory, which sometimes left its mark upon their children. Scandal was even more bold and noisy when a widow remarried; but there, at least, in the midst of all the *salauderies* of the charivari, which knew neither bounds nor bridle, there was no question of the purity of a young bride, given a prey to the moral defilement of immodest glances and the language of libertines.

CHAPTER LXVIII

THE Dauphin Louis, elder son of Charles VII, was in his youth as great a libertine as his grandfather, Charles VI, had been; he had a great many mistresses, who presented him with a number of bastards, but these he did not find it difficult to recognize, to provide with dowries, and to marry off, while he was on the throne; according to tradition, he also placed a number of illegitimates in bourgeois families, where he had certain "godmothers" with whom he did not cease to keep company when he became King; his favorites and his servants did not pride themselves upon a conduct any more regular than that of their master, and his little court, in Dauphiny, as at Genepe in Brabant, where he sought asylum against paternal wrath, was distinguished from the courts of France and Burgundy at this period by the relaxation of manner that was prevalent there. It is sufficient to leaf through the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles du Bon Roi Louis XI* in order to form an idea of the spirit of debauchery which lay behind the gayety of this court, where each one prided himself upon his gallant prowess and kept a record of it, so to speak, by divulging his feats under the transparent veil of supposititious names. The Dauphin encouraged by his own example the license of these raconteurs, Antoine de la Sale, the Sire of Dampmartin, Jean de la Roche and other officers of his house, who of an evening, seated in a vast chimney nook, appeared to be engaged in a contest to see who could tell the most obscene stores.

The women, it is true, did not sit in upon these occasions; they lived at that time a very retired life, in the more retired precincts of the household; they had no relations with the men beyond those ceremonies at which they appeared in public. They passed the time at manual labor in the interior of the ménage; they had fewer occasions than they had impulses to do wrong; they were ready enough for love, schooled as they were by the reading of the romances of Chivalry but their virtue was safeguarded by a courtly etiquette which permitted no one to come at them. Thus, Margaret of Scotland, first wife of Louis XI, was gravely compromised by the mere fact that she had been found without a light in her own apartment with her women and two or three gentlemen. One of the latter, named Jamet de Tillay,

prided himself upon having obtained from the Dauphin's lady some favor, a favor limited, doubtlessly, to a *doux propos* or to a squeeze of the hand. Calumny, however, laid hold of the indiscretion of Jamet de Tillay, and two or three witnesses attributed to him very insulting words respecting this Princess, who, after having at first received him very well, afterwards kept him at a distance because of his lack of tact. According to these witnesses, Jamet had said, in pointing out the Dauphin's lady, that "she sometimes girdled herself too tightly, sometimes too loosely," indicating that she was in the habit of spending her nights in reading or in composing rondeaux: "Have you seen that lady? she has rather the manner of a lecheress than of a great mistress!" But the sire of Tillay, while justifying himself for having spoken ill of the Dauphin's lady, permitted a suspicion to rest upon her graver than the bitter words with which he denied his wrong speaking; he related, in the inquiry which was held upon this subject after Margaret's death, that this Princess had been "lying upon her couch" (*couchée sur sa couche*), with a number of her women about her before the torches were lighted; Messire Regnault, maître d'hôtel to the Dauphin's lady, and another gentleman were both leaning "over the couch" where Margaret reclined; the voices in the room were low, and there were intervals of silence. Jamet de Tillay, who entered at that moment, made a lively remark to Messire Regnault, to the effect "that it was a great lechery in him and in the other officers of the said lady that the torches had not yet been lighted." Haste was made to light the torches, but the Dauphin's lady was so afflicted by Jamet de Tillay's unworthy words, that she fell into a profound melancholy and died of consumption. One of the ladies of honor, Jeanne de Trasse, meeting the Sire de Tillay face to face after the poor Princess had breathed her last sigh, could not refrain from saying to him threateningly: "Ah, false and malicious scoundrel, she died on your account!" The rumor then ran about the court that the Sire de Tillay had been Margaret's lover, and that his jealousy of a rival had inspired in him the stinging words which had mortally affected the Dauphin's lady.

History has avenged the honor of this Princess, who was undoubtedly but little disposed to gallantry. She it was who, entering a garden where the poet Alain Chartier had fallen asleep, approached him and kissed him on the mouth. "I never before kissed a man," she said to the persons of her suite, who were all the more astonished

by reason of the fact that Maître Alain was the ugliest man in France. "I merely kissed the mouth from which have come so many beautiful things." Margaret was of remarkable beauty, but her husband reproached her with having fetid breath;* as Comines says, he had married her "to his displeasure, and so long as she lived, he regretted the fact." When he lost her in 1444, he did not think at first of taking another wife, although she had not given him a child. It was not until 1451 that he was married to Charlotte of Savoy. This Princess was but six years old on the day of her wedding, and the marriage was not consummated until the day Charlotte attained the age of puberty; she was then barely twelve years when she entered the bed of her spouse. The latter, while he waited for her, had not slackened his amours; he was greatly taken with two young ladies, Phélie Renard and Marguerite de Sassenage; he had by them three or four children; but he preferred to women of quality the simple bourgeois girls, the wives and daughters of merchants. That was why he selected, at Dijon, Huette Jacquelin, at Lyons La Gionne, and at Paris La Passefilon; he kept them simultaneously, took them with him on his travels and made them share his couch after suppers at which *contes gras* had provided the seasoning. He did not blush to be seen in public with La Gionne and La Passefilon, who were well known to the people: they were called the "King's Godmothers" (*commères du roi*), but their respectability (*honnêteté*: it is the word of which the chronicler Jean de Troyes makes use) had won for them the respect of all, despite the sufficiently dishonorable duties which they shared in the King's chambers. The bourgeoisie were not indignant to observe that Louis preferred the little bourgeois girl to the great ladies; and his two "godmothers," La Gionne and La Passefilon, who did not pride themselves, like Agnès Sorel, upon being prostitutes, were not like the latter, under the necessity of having to complain of the ill conduct of the people of Paris toward them. It is our opinion that the names Gionne and Passefilon were nicknames which had been conferred upon their bearers out of raillery, but there is nothing to guide us in an inquiry into the etymology of these names. Both girls were married under the auspices of their royal protector, and both gave birth to respectable families. A long time after their reign as courtezans, the populace still danced a jig known as *la Gionne*, while

*Translator's Note:—Attention has been drawn by modern authorities to the sexual importance of the breath, particularly in marriage.

the women wore their hair *à la Passefilon*; but the origin of the coiffure and the dance had long since been forgotten.

Despite the rôle which these two women played simultaneously with the King, a rôle which appears to have continued after their marriage in 1476, the biographer of Louis XI, Philippe de Comines, bears witness to the fact that this Prince, having lost in 1459 a son named Joachin, "made a vow to God, in my presence, never to touch any woman but the Queen, his wife." It is known that Louis XI was not deadly concerned with keeping an oath; yet Comines appears to believe that he persevered in this rash vow, "although the Queen," he adds, "was not one of those with whom one takes great pleasure, but otherwise a very good lady." As a matter of fact, Charlotte of Savoy, who had been legally married from the age of six, lived almost always a very retired life in the château of Amboise, "keeping very little state," says Brantôme, "and being very poorly clad, like a simple demoiselle, and there she was left, with a little court, to say her prayers, while he (the King) went promenading about and having a good time." It is not astonishing that this Princess whom Louis XI did not love led a chaste and virtuous existence in this abandoned retreat; but the little court which surrounded her was undoubtedly less wise than she. But Louis XI, who frequently changed his residence, and who had about him, as Comines says, (Book VI, chapter 13) "so many women at his command" (*à son commandement*), did not keep his vow of conjugal fidelity, until he was infirm and ready to die.

It might, then, be said that the court of France, under this reign, did not set an example of decency and restraint in manners. There was, among the great as among the small, a general abandon to be observed in ideas, actions and words; metaphysical and romantic love, of which Chivalry had been the code, had yielded to a positive and material love, which frequently led to debauchery and to scandal. Nothing was to be heard of but deceived husbands, intriguing widows, profligate wives, seduced girls. The tales of Boccaccio had, in a manner, put on body and soul in French society. After so many public calamities, after war, pestilence, famine and misery, there was no thought of anything but making up for time lost and seeking amusement. Prostitution had made much progress, on account of the difficulty in earning a livelihood by honest labor; thus this passage from the *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris* (in 1435) however obscure it may be, leaves no doubt as to the sufferings and embarrassments of

working women: "In that time when each one had learned a trade, wages were so bad that the good women who had been trained to earn five or six *blancs* a day gave themselves readily for two and lived upon them." It is possible that these "good women" were not prostitutes, as an attempt has been made to make them out to be, but in any case, an unfortunate one who did not earn more than two *blancs* a day for livelihood, must have been only too ready to give her body in exchange for a few sous. The reign of Louis XI, to judge by other facts reported in the *Chronique Scandaleuse* of Jean de Troyes, was still more favorable than the preceding reigns had been to Prostitution properly so called.

Surely, public morals were little respected at a time when, upon the occasion of the festivals attending the entry of the King at Paris in 1461, there were exposed to public view "three very beautiful girls wholly nude, and one could see their beautiful teats, round and hard, which was a thing very pleasant to see;" at an time when the talking (*jargonneurs*) birds, magpies, jays and screech owls could only repeat obscene words, like *paillard* (lecher), *fil de putain* (son of a whore) and "a number of other fine words," remarks Jean de Troyes, in 1468; at a time when a gross Norman who *kept* his own daughter had by her a number of children whom he slew, in conspiracy with the daughter, as soon as they were born (1466); at a time when a monk "had both sexes, the man and the woman, each aiding the other in such a fashion that he became large with child" and had an accouchement (1478); at a time, finally, when a valet de chambre of the King, named Regnault la Pie, had public relations with the aged wife of Maître Nicole Bataille, the most learned legalist of France, who died of chagrin and of rage (*de courroux*) in 1482, after having seen his entire fortune squandered through the *lechery* of this blackguard wife (*chagorne*) and her *ribaux particuliers* (see, under the dates indicated, the *Chronique Scandaleuse*, written by a registrar of the town hall of Paris).*

Louis XI did nothing but laugh at these adventures; he laughed more heartily than ever upon learning that his minister, Cardinal La Balue, who had adulterous relations with the wife of a notary in Paris, a woman named Jeanne Debois and "famous for her amours," as Sauval says, had fallen into a trap which one of his rivals, the Seigneur de Villiers-le-Bocage, had set for him upon his return from one of these gallant visits. At the moment that the prelate, mounted

*Translator's Note:—See Balzac's conte *La Mère du Roi* (J. U. N.).

upon his mule and accompanied by his torch-bearers, was passing through the rue Barre-du-Bec, a troop of armed men suddenly attacked him, and he would perhaps have been thrown to the pavement, if his mule had not taken the bit in its teeth and carried him all the way to the cloister of Notre Dame where he dwelt.* This affair had no serious consequences for the responsible parties, for the reason that the prelate, who feared being compromised by a public proceeding, as well as having his mistress involved, brought pressure to bear to stop any action on the part of the authorities. A trial of another sort, still more scandalous, which occurred in 1477, failed to compromise very gravely a favorite of the King who was at once his barber and his valet de chambre, one Olivier le Dain. This personage was not brought to trial, but his servant and friend, one Daniel de Bar, had to defend himself against an accusation which undoubtedly would have reflected shamefully upon Olivier le Dain if De Bar had been condemned. Two women of evil life, one married to a certain Colin Pannier, the other living in concubinage with a man named Janeier, accused Daniel de Bar "of having forced them, and of having done and permitted upon them the violent, filthy sin of sodomy." As a consequence, Daniel de Bar was arrested and brought to trial in the criminal court, by sentence of the provost of Paris; but when the case came to trial, it developed that Daniel was innocent of the actions imputed to him, while the two dissolute women who had endeavored to incriminate him confessed that they had falsely and wickedly accused Olivier le Dain's servant. As a consequence, they were condemned by the provost of Paris to "be beaten nude and banished from the realm," and their goods "confiscated to the profit of the King, the which was executed through the streets of Paris," on Wednesday, the 11th of March, 1477. Thanks to this decision, Olivier le Dain and his servant both escaped shameful suspicions which might have brought them to the stake; for at this period, the sin against nature, when it came up in court, was punished no less severely than bestiality.

This abominable sin was very rare in France up to the time of the expeditions into Italy, when the armies of Charles VIII and Louis XII became familiar with it. However, the courts of these two Kings were practically safeguarded by the good examples of the two monarchs, who did not appreciate love *à l'Italienne*, as Brantôme puts it. Charles VIII and Louis XII possessed in the highest degree the pas-

*Translator's Note:—See Balzac, *Ioyeulsetez du Roy Loys le Unziesme* (J. U. N.)

sion for women. The Duke of Orleans, who became the wise King, Louis XII, was so debauched in his youth that he regarded neither age, face or condition, but was always ready to *faire chère lie* with the first comer; and so to him was applied the proverb, which had been put into circulation at the time of his grandfather, Louis of Orleans, brother of Charles VI: "Every woman ought to be forbidden to go to Orleans." Nevertheless, this Prince, whose manners were so relaxed, always refused to be pleasant or even polite toward the Regent of France, Madame de Beaujeu, who was greatly taken with him, and who did not hide from him the lively sentiment to which he always avoided responding: "If this Prince," says Brantôme, "had been willing to bend a bit to the love of Madame Anne de France, he might have had a good share in the government." But far from this, he was constantly cold and disdainful toward this Princess, who displeased him greatly. At a game of rackets at which he was playing in the presence of the King and his sister who was married to the Sire de Beaujeu, the latter decided a certain doubtful play against the Duke of Orleans, who pretended not to hear her decision, remarking "that whoever had condemned him, if he were a man, he had lied, and if he were a woman, she was a whore." This insult, hurled in the Regent's face, turned her love to hate, and the Duke of Orleans was soon obliged to leave the court and to become an open rebel against his implacable enemy, who made him a prisoner and shut him up in the great tower of the Château de Loches.*

King Charles VIII, who died young and suddenly, as Brantôme tells us, "for having loved women more than his slight constitution could endure," was of an ardent and passionate nature. Nevertheless, when he had espoused the beautiful and virtuous Anne of Brittany, who was looked upon as the greatest prude of her time, he resorted to gallantry only secretly, and the court of France, reformed by the example of the young Queen, became a school of wisdom and austere virtue. On the other hand, Queen Anne had about her more ladies and young ladies than had been seen at the court during preceding reigns; it was she "who began," Brantôme tells us, "to set up the great court of ladies, for she had a very large suite of them, both of ladies and of girls, and never refused any of them anything. . . . She caused them to be brought up wisely, and all after the example which she set them, and they made themselves wise and virtuous." Charles

*Translator's Note:—See Balzac's conte *Le Chateau d'Azay*.

VIII, nevertheless, found among these maids of honor a mistress who had enough power over him to prevent his making a second expedition into Italy. In the course of his former expeditions, which had succeeded so happily, the King of France had not lacked occasion to be faithless at once to his mistress and to his wife; all the cities through which he passed with his triumphant army offered him amorous recreations, which caused him only the embarrassment of choice and regret at his own insufficiency; when he made his entry into Milan, "the beautiful and great ladies of the country and the city," reports Brantôme, who is here merely translating the *Chronicle* of Gaguin, "appeared in the streets and principal places, and so well adorned of head and body that there had never been anything so fine to see among our French, who reflected that their own ladies in France were not so gentle nor so beautifully adorned." These too seductive sirens approached the King under pretext of presenting their children to him, and the King had but "all the more leisure and amusement in contemplating their beauty, their good graces, and the superb gentility of their accoutrements."

Charles VIII marked the various stages of his march through Italy with a number of natural children, who later were to dishonor their birth; and he would appear to have escaped a deadly encounter with the Plague of Naples, which afflicted a great number of his officers and his soldiers. The plague of Naples, it is true, was not yet widespread in Italy, but the King, who gave free reign to his sensual whims, would not have been restrained by any such fear as this; there was but one sentiment, more elevated and less egotistic, which could impose continence upon him. "The delights of Venus and the temptations of pleasure," says Simon Nanquier, in a Latin eclogue on the death of this Prince, "never caused him to depart from the path of justice." Upon his passage through the village of Asti, in retiring for the night to the chamber which had been set aside for him, he found there a girl of the most marvelous beauty. Two of his domestics, "who were charged with his pleasures," according to Varilass, had chosen this girl for the King's couch. She was kneeling before an image of the Virgin and praying to it when Charles VIII entered. The King invited her gently to come to him; she obeyed trembling. She wept and groaned, and the King made up his mind that he would know the cause of her grief. "I beseech you to save my honor," she cried to him. "It is a grace that I ask of you in the name of this

Immaculate Virgin!" Then she told him how her parents had sold her to the royal valets de chambre for His Majesty's use. Charles VIII admired the great beauty of this girl, but he did not yield to temptation, reassuring the innocent victim, who was at his mercy, by informing her of what he purposed to do for her. He learned that she loved a young man, who loved her also, and who was to have married her; he sent for this young man upon the spot, along with the father and mother of the girl; he demanded that the two lovers be affianced in his presence, and he himself took the responsibility for their dowry, by seeing that five hundred crowns in gold were sent to them.

Upon his return from the conquest of Naples, Charles VIII, who had had a good time there, soon came to renounce women; he did not feel in himself the strength to go on living as he had lived before; he did not even keep for himself the mistress whom he had among the maids of honor, but became as regular in his habits as a cloistered monk. For his physicians had advised moderation seeing that his strength was not equal to his desires. This tardy moderation did not prolong his life for any length of time. His cousin, the Duke of Orleans, who succeeded him as the nearest heir to the throne, had already changed his own manner of life and had mastered his vagrant passions. He was enamored of Queen Anne of Brittany, and in order to be able to contract this second marriage, he undertook to have his marriage with Jeanne de France broken off, although this marriage had been sealed by twenty-five or twenty-six years of cohabitation. He pretended, however, in the course of the sad and scandalous proceedings, that the said marriage had never been consummated, for the reason that the bride had been "vitiating in body" (*viciée de corps*). The pious Jeanne replied that, while recognizing that she was not "as beautiful and as well built as other women," she had, nevertheless, performed the labors and duties of marriage. The King himself underwent an interrogatory before the officials of Tours, and he declared blushing that, to the best of his belief, he had never made full use of his rights as a husband: *Neque realiter licet intus fuerit*, wrote the clerk, who endeavored to disguise as much as possible in his legal Latin the impropriety of questions and answers. And so, when the judged objected to Madame Jeanne de France, that according to the declarations of her husband, she had not conformed to the marriage state in such a manner as to produce children, the clerk wrote in his transcript: "*Quod non potuisset aut posset parere, sed nec semen*

virile secundum naturae congruentiam recipere, imo neque a viro intra claustra pudoris naturaliter cognosci." (See the *Hist. du Seizième Siècle* by Bibliophile Jacob,* Vol. I, pages 113 and following.) The tribunal demanded that Jeanne be visited by matrons with the object of determining her physical state, but this poor Princess, who has since been canonized as a saint, refused to submit to a humiliation so painful to her modesty, preferring to agree with good grace to a divorce. She entered a convent, and Louis XII was no sooner free than he married his dear Anne of Brittany.

During this reign the court of France was more virtuous than it had ever been; the moral influence of Queen Anne made itself felt as had that of Queen Blanche at the court of St. Louis. Prostitution which, by the evidence of poets and preachers, spared no class of French society, halted at the threshold of the court, or only entered there secretly and far from the vigilant eyes of the King. Louis XII did not interfere with the austere surveillance which his good wife (*tant bonne femme*) exercised over the manners of his courtiers; he must have laughed up his sleeve, for he could not but remember having been a *bon raillard et joyeux compagnon*, but he did nothing contrary to the ideas and intentions of his chaste better-half, and when the clerks of la Basoche and the Enfants-sans-souci dared, in their farces, to mock the hypocrisy which reigned at the Queen's court, Louis XII would remark: "I wish everyone to enjoy liberty, but I also wish the young people to declare any abuses which may exist in my court, since the confessors and others who play the part of wise men are unwilling to speak of them; provided nothing be said touching my wife, for I intend that the honor of ladies be guarded." It required nothing else than the rigidity of Anne of Brittany to restrain the prevalent disorderly manners, for the expeditions into Italy and the sojourn of the French army in the conquered countries had resulted in bringing into France Italian habits, an immoderate taste for sensual pleasures and all the refinements of voluptuousness. As to the Plague of Naples, that was the immediate consequence of the Neapolitan expedition; but in the following wars, during the whole of the reign of Louis XII, this new plague, which was constantly being acquired at its source, had become so naturalized among the soldiers who had contracted it, at Genoa, at Naples, at Milan and at Venice, that the name of French Plague was no longer questioned by anyone.

**Translator's Note*:—Our author's pseudonym.

Louis XII had found it difficult enough to resist the seductions of those charming Italian women, who appeared to have sworn an oath to make him unfaithful to his absent spouse; he must have succumbed more than once, and he was only preserved from dangers threatening his continence by plunging into a mystically Platonic liason with the beauteous Genoese Thomassine Spinola, whose *intendio* he was, or lover of her heart, while the nobility about him were plunging all the while into the delights of love with a blind and drunken frenzy. It is difficult to picture the influence of the Italian women over the conquerors of Italy; the latter were vanquished and subjected in their turn. The contemporary historians have not neglected to give us a portrait of these enchantresses who exerted so unhappy an influence over the manners and the health of their imprudent admirers. Following is the manner in which Jean Marot, poet and valet de chambre to Anne of Brittany, pictures for us, in his poem, the *Voyage de Genes*, the ravishing spectacle which awaited the conquerors upon their entrance into the city of Milan in the year 1507:

*Lors les ouvrouers furent plains et couvers
De maincte dame, en beaulté très exquise.
La Foyre ay vene à Lyon et Anvers,
Lendit, Gibray, et autres lieux divers;
Mais onc ne viz si belle marchandise:
Chacune estoit en une cheize assise,
Levée en hault, pour leur corps montsrer mieulx.
Mais les aucuns, de leur gloire envieux,
Disoient que fard les rendoit ainsi belles;
Mais quoy qu'ils dient, je croy, si m'aident dieux,
Qu'on ne sauroit mieulx repaistre ses yeulx,
Qui ne verroit choses célestielles.**

*Translator's Note:—

Then all the streets were filled with many a dame
Of beauty most exquisite, as though the Fair
Had come to Lyons or Antwerp of old fame,
To Lendit or Gibray, of renown the same;
But such fine wares were never seen elsewhere:
Here each was seated in a pretty chair,
Raised up on high, to give a better view
Of the beauties which she had to offer you;
Though some there were who said, when all was done,
Their beauty solely to their paint was due:
So help me gods! I know it is not true,
And there's not their like beneath the sun.

The same spectacle, which had struck with admiration the poet, accustomed to the decent and naïve graces of the French ladies, produced upon him the same effect again, two years later, when Louis XII made a second entry into Milan, where he went to put down a bloody rebellion. The fair ones of Milan undoubtedly had much to do with the pardon which the King of France accorded to the rebellious city. Jean Marot was there, and he was captivated, like the oldest captains, by the sight of the feminine triumph which eclipsed that of the King:

*De dames moult frisques,
Oeuvres déifiques,
Faces angéliques,
Ouvroyrs et boutiques
Dyaprez estoient:
La, mainctz fantastiques,
Amans lunatiques,*
Voyans telz reliques,
Soubz regardz obliques
Leurs yeulx repaissoient;
D'habits auctentiques
Carcans magnifiques,
Pierreries antiques,
Par toutes pratiques,
Leurs corps phalleroient;
Puis, en leurs traficques,
Dardoient, comme picques,
Regards vénériques,
Dont amantz lubriques
Ils mortioient.***

**Translator's Note*:—Cf. Shakespeare's "lunatic lover."

***Translator's Note*:—

Ladies quite gay,
Goddesses at play,
And angel faces
Of many graces
Were there on view;
Fancies egad!
And lovers mad,
Looking at all the shows
With a glance that knows—
Oh, there was much to see and do!

Habits of old,
Carcanets untold,
Stones of price
And every device
That woman's beauty ever knew;
Many a trick
And subtle prick
And many a lovelorn glance
Their charms enhance
And bring their lovers rue.

There is cause for astonishment in the fact that Queen Anne of Brittany possessed so much power and will that the contact with Italy which was corrupting France was not felt during her lifetime in the *cour des dames* which she had established at the Château de Blois, which was her ordinary residence. She had a firm faith that public manners might be bettered, and she made great efforts to restore the virtues of her sex to a place of honor. Jean Marot, who composed by her order the *Doctrinal des Dames*, is content to paraphrase the fine precepts which she taught, especially by her example. One of these precepts was "to be chaste while being beautiful" (*d'estre chaste en estant belle*). The rondeau which the poet wrote on this subject begins thus:

*Qui a ces deux, chasteté et beaulté,
Vanter se peult qu'en toute loyauté
Toute autre dame elle surmonte et passe,
Veu que Beaulté oncques jour ne fust lasse
De faire guerre à dame Chasteté.
Mais quant ensemble elles font unité,
C'est don divin joinct à l'humanité,
Qui rend la dame accomplie de grace,
Qui a ces deux.**

Anne of Brittany thus commends decency (*honnesteté*) in the *Doctrinal* which Jean Marot composed in eighty rondeaux,

*. . . . Car c'est la perle et gemme
Que les dieux ont enchassée en noblesse,***

while it is *prudence* and a good deportment (*beau maintien*) which

*. . . . Est la poste et vray guide
Pour monter dame au temple de vertu.****

**Translator's Note:*— Who is at once both chaste and fair
If of all women beyond compare
And every other lady doth excel,
Seeing that Dame Beauty loves but too well
To war on Lady Chastity, but where
You find them both together, there
You find a very heavenly air,
And by her graces you can tell
The one who has them both.

***Translator's Note:*— . . . Because it is that pearl and gem
The gods have set in nobility.

****Translator's Note:*— . . . Is the true steed and guide
By which a lady mounts to virtue's temple.

She invites the ladies "to set a good example to others" (*d'estre bon exemple aux autres*) "to avoid idleness" (*d'éviter oysiveté*), "to have a regard for honor" (*d'avoir esgard a l'honneur*), and finally "to love one God and one man only" (*d'aymer un Dieu et ung homme seulement*). There is to be discerned in these edifying rhymes the chaste inspiration which Anne of Brittany had communicated to her *poete in ordinaire*, and it is to be seen that she desired to make poetry, which commonly served to corrupt hearts and enervate souls, serve the purposes of moral instruction at her court. Anne of Brittany cared little for the commonplaces of profane love which the poets never tired of putting into their frequently licentious works; she reproached them with employing expressions which were too free and which were an offense to a decent ear, for she would not suffer in a book what she would blush to hear from the mouth of the author; she believed that one should be chaste in word as well as in deed. Thus she found it difficult to pardon Sire de Grignaux, her knight of honor, who taught her, in place of a compliment which she desired to address to the ambassador from Spain, certain obscenities (*salaudries*) in the Spanish language, which she did not understand, and which she was preparing to utter in solemn audience, when the King informed her of the pleasantry which he had authorized as a laughable pastime, as Brantôme says.

It was only the death of this wise Queen which unloosed the tongues of court poets. Jean Marot, who had just composed his *Vray Disant Avocate des Dames*, in obedience to his "good lady and mistress," fell back at once into indecent poetry, and began rhyming once more on gallant and even smutty themes. In a moment, the court of France underwent a complete metamorphosis, and Prostitution once more reared its head. Jean Marot lets us see that manners were more relaxed then than they had been before:

*Au faict d'amours beau parler n'a plus lieu,
Car, sans argent, vous parlez en hebreu,
Et fussiez-vous le plus beau fils du monde,
Il faut foncer, ou je veux qu'on me tonde,
Si vous mettez jamais pied à l'estrieu.**

*Translator's Note:—At fine words ladies these days do boo,
For without money, you speak Hebrew,
And were you the finest, bravest lad
In all the world, money must be had,
Or they will slam the door on you.

This was a result of the wars in Italy. The habits of debauchery which the soldiers had formed on the other side of the mountains followed them back into France, and the French women, without being aware of the fact and in spite of themselves, proceeded to model themselves after the Italian women, who had left with the vanquishers so many charming souvenirs. The gentlemen who had taken part in the expeditions of Charles VIII and Louis XII did not fail, upon their return, to exalt the incomparable charms of the Italian ladies, however unfortunate (*maleficiés*) they may have been in their amours. The French women, whom their husbands and lovers appeared to be depreciating to the advantage of these dangerous sirens, had conceived for the latter an implacable jealousy and hatred; they liked to stress the defects of their foreign rivals, while insisting upon their own superiority. Following is a rondeau Jean Marot wrote at the dictation of some beautiful lady, who was desolated at seeing a Lombardian preferred to her:

*Pour le deduict d'amoureuse pasture,
A quelqu'un fiz l'autre jour ouverture:
Qui valloit mieulx, la Francoise ou Lombarde?
Il me respond: "La Lombarde est braguarde,
Mais froide et molle et sourde soubz monture.*

*Beau parler ont, et sobre nourriture:
Mais le surplus n'est que toute paincture,
Vour le voyez; car chascune se farde
Pour le deduict.*

*La Francoise est entière et sans rompture,
Doulce au monter, mais fière à la poincture
Plaisir la mayne; au profit ne regarde.
Conclusion: qui qu'en parle or brocarde,
Francoises sont chefsz d'ouvre de nature
Pour le deduict.**

**Translator's Note:*—For pastime in love's pasturage,
I heard an answer very sage;
When asked if French or Lombard maid
He did prefer: "The Lombard's a jade
Who brags a lot but does not assuage.
Their words of their life are a goodly guage;
The rest in rouging find umbrage
For pastime's sake.
But the French lass: another page.
She's fair to see in youth or age,

The French ladies might say and do what they liked; the men continued to run after the Italian women, who became the permanent attraction of the campaigns in Italy. The gentlemen of the court found themselves so well off on the other side of the mountains that they were in no hurry to return to France, but set themselves up at Milan and in the principal cities of that Province with their mistresses, as though they cared no more whatever for their own wives and children who remained in France. Throughout the reign of Louis XII, and during the first years of the reign of Francis I, this was the custom. The poor French women were at their wit's ends to know how to overcome such seductive rivals, who robbed them thus of friends and husbands, the latter only coming home when they were ruined in health and wealth. By the time of Francis I's accession, the fine flower of the French nobility had crossed the Alps and was scattered throughout all Lombardy; only grey beards and white hair were to be seen at the court of France; the married women might well believe themselves widows, while the young ladies had cause to fear they would remain virgins. And so they entered into a sort of conspiracy against the fair sex of Milan, and charged the poet, Jean Marot, to write to the "Courtiers of France, being then in Italy" (*Courtisans de France estans pour lors en Italie*) a satiric epistle, in which the Lombard women were to be compared to the French, in a manner to bring to light the virtues and merits of the one, the vices and the imperfections of the other. It was not without reason that to Jean Marot had been confided the delicate rôle of secretary to the "ladies of Paris;" he had himself resided in Italy long enough to become well versed in Italian manners; he knew the strong points and the weak points of those *étranges galloises*, who were doing so great a wrong to the fair ones of his own country. It was, then, not difficult for him to tell the former where they stood, in the name of the ladies of Paris. He begins by accusing them of only giving themselves from interested motives, for

. . . . *Il les faut d'or et d'argent saisir,
Ains que gesir et coucher soubz leur aïse.**

And no attention to profit paid.
Then, to conclude, I am afraid,
She holds the world in vassalage
For pastime's sake.

*Translator's Note:— You must with gold and silver vouch,
If you would find asylum in their couch.

It is to “get money” (*tirer argent*) that a fair Lombardian paints her face and composes her toilette; cupidity alone excites and impels them to commit that “gentle misdeed” (*doux méfait*) on which all the Gods have pity when it is absolved by love, but which becomes a defilement when inspired by avarice;

*Mais cœur françois, de son amy, prend garde,**

and love does what money cannot do. In Italy, old and young are equally avid, and traffic in their favors with the same skill; sometimes the old workwoman (*vieille ouvrière*) plays the “baby doll” (*poupine*) better than the youngest “godmother.”

*Quant, en la France, une dame decline,
Elle résigne aux autres le deduit:
Se retirer est bon, quaint il est nuyct.***

The Lombard women have cloth of gold gowns for their public appearances, and they resemble fairies, so daintily are they coiffed (*coiffées mignonnement et à leur poste*); but under their fripperies, they are more worn and more *débiffées* than the old socks. It is because they do not eat every day, and because they do not spare their poor bodies; whereas the French women are plump and well-nourished, so that they may say with pride:

*Fermes sommes et le serons;
Tetons avons; elles, tetasses
Pendans, comme vieilles becasses
Dessus leurs jambes de herons.****

There are only fine habits to be found on the backs of these triumphant Lombardian dames; the *surplus ne vault maille*, and the gallants have not found *sous l'escaille* what they hoped for. This is not all: they are colder than a leg of lamb at Christmas time, softer than tripe, dirtier than rubbish, despite their fine trappings and ornaments. In

**Translator's Note*:— But let French heart of its friend take care.

***Translator's Note*:— While in France, when a dame declines,
She yields to others her amorous right,
Content to retire when it is night.

****Translator's Note*:—We are plump and mean to be;
We have breasts, as you can see;
Not flabby sacks like old woodhens,
With heron-legs in marshy fens.

contrast with these villainous debauchees, the ladies of Paris do not sell themselves; they only desire to show themselves for what they are worth to the ingrates who have forgotten them:

*S'aucun avoit esprit spirituel
Tant qu'il fut tel d'aviser leurs abbus,
Il congnoistroit que soubz nostre mantel
N'y a riens, fors que le vray naturel,
Et que tout bel avons tant sus que jus;
Tetins aiguz, membres blancs et charnus;
Puis, ces gros culz, pour l'amoureux affaire,
Si bien troussiez qu'il n'y a que refaire.**

If the Lombardians had been willing to consent, this would have been a new judgment of Paris, provoked by the French ladies who declare clearly that to

*Juger le cas
Selon le droit,
Mettre fauldroit
Les robes bas;
Puis, sans debatz,
Pour ces esbatz,
Veoir où nature deffaudroit.***

But the Lombard women, as one may well imagine, do not hasten to accept the challenge, and the ladies of Paris invite the *Courtisans de France* to return without waiting for a decision on the question. They address themselves suppliantly to the King, Francis I, who is in no more of a hurry than are his nobility to recross the mountains:

**Translator's Note:—* If any has a mind to help him see,
He will soon be advised of their abuse,
And he will know that, under our finery,
All is but nature and no mimicry,
Since we are schooled in nature's rightful use,
With white plump limbs and pointed breasts, not loose,
And with our generous rears for amours made;
And turned so well the assault must be remade.

***Translator's Note:—* To judge the case
By the law,
We'll drop our skirts
And win with awe;
Without debate,
For pleasure's state,
A finer sight you never saw.

*Vous nous tenez
Trop grant rudesse;
Amour nous presse,
Desir oppresse
Nos cueurs, de grant crainte estonnez.
Paris pleure, et Tours a destresse,
Bloys languist, Amboise ne cesse
De crier: "Sire, retournez."**

Francis I and his gentlemen quitted Italy with regret, where, despite the ladies of Paris and Jean Marot, love seemed to them better than in France, and they brought back with them Italian manners, which mingled with French manners throughout the whole of the 16th century.

**Translator's Note:—*You men but yearn
In haste to flee;
Can you not see
How love's musketry
Peppers our hearts, and how we burn?
Paris and Tours weep as we,
Blois and Amboise unceasingly
Languish and cry: "O Sire, return!"

CHAPTER LXIX

THE history of Prostitution at the court of France during the sixteenth century might fill an entire book, if one cared to collect all the anecdotes which tend to depict the manners of the aristocracy under the Valois; it would be necessary, nearly, in order to draw an exact picture of the incredible depravity, to extract from the works of Brantôme everything which that abbot-courtier has been able to gather in the way of scandalous facts, facts which he relates in the freest fashion in the world, without appearing to suspect that he may offend the modesty of anyone. This circumstance alone would prove, better than all the tales, the degree of corruption which French society of the time of Charles IX and Henri III had reached; one no longer possessed the sentiment of decency, and one felt no embarrassment at explaining, without reticence, even in the presence of the ladies, the filthiest and the most ignoble mysteries of debauchery. Thus, Brantôme, in dedicating his *Recueil des Dames Galantes* to the Duke of Alençon, "son and brother of our Kings," begs the latter to "fortify with his name and his authority" these *Discourses*, filled with the *bon mots et contes* which this Prince had deigned to teach him "very privately" (*fort privement*) in their familiar conversation; and the first manuscript in this smutty collection, so precious, nevertheless, from the point of view of court history, is dedicated to Queen Marguerite, divorced wife of Henry IV, to whom the author pays homage. And yet, he did not dare to print during his own lifetime the *contes, histoires, discours et beaux mots* which he had collected "with great pain" (*avecques grande peine*); but in his will, he commanded his niece, the Comtesse de Durtal, to have them printed: "I wish also," he says in this will, "that the first copy which issues from the press be given as a present, well bound and covered, to Queen Marguerite, my most illustrious mistress, who has done me the honor to glance at some of these tales and to find them pleasing and well done."

We are forced to limit ourselves on this inexhaustible subject, and we shall endeavor merely to describe the sort of Prostitution which reigned at the court of France under each King of the Valois branch; for each of these Kings gave, by his own example and tastes, a special character to the manners of his time, and it may be said that, if the

sixteenth century is entirely devoted to a monstrous debauchery which would appear to have been the end and motive of all human endeavor still, nothing less resembles the license of the court of Henri II than the license of the court of Francis I: the one is still French, at least by intervals; the other has become entirely Italian. Under Francis I, we find here and there, amid the most shameful excesses, a few noble and pure reminiscences of the Chivalry of the Middle Ages; under Henri II, on the contrary, everything is degraded, debased, defiled, to the contempt of all religious and social laws. Brantôme has more to say than we shall have upon this sorry subject of the scandalous conduct of his contemporaries. And often, even, in quoting him textually, we shall be forced to leave in his works many obscene passages which our pen refuses to transcribe.

Francis I, as one of his panegyrists, whom Brantôme did not succeed in refuting on this point, has remarked, was "truly great, for he had great virtues and great vices also." One of the fools of his court, Triboulet or Caillette, might have added that he was great also by reason of his nose, since the people had nicknamed him "the big-nosed King" (*le roi grand nez*). Such a nose might well have counted for something in the vices if not in the virtues, of the mighty King. This King undoubtedly possessed great and noble qualities, which were a part of his knightly character, but he was, all his life, so dominated by his passion for women that the majority of his kingly acts revealed no other impulse. Thus, according to Brantôme (see the life of the admiral Bonnivet, in the *Hommes Illustres et Grands Capitaines François*), the first expedition to Milan, which brought on the disastrous wars in Italy, was determined by the desire of the King to see la signora Clerice, a lady of Milan, "then esteemed the most beautiful of the ladies of Italy," and by the King's desire "to sleep with her." Bonnivet, who had been this lady's lover, and who desired to see her once more, knew the King's weakness and advised the latter to cross the mountains in order to make the acquaintance of this marvel: "And that," exclaimed Brantôme, "was the principal cause of the King's crossing, which is not known to all!" This fact alone would prove that Francis I would have sacrificed his kingdom and his crown in order to satisfy a gallant whim. He had contracted this amorous fury early in life; the *Journal* of his mother, Louise of Savoy, informs us that he was addicted to it from the age of eighteen years: "On the fourth of September, 1512, he had a malady in his secret parts," and afterwards,

this malady reappeared a number of times with new symptoms and new pains, which sometimes drew from him these words, according to the report of his biographer, Mathieu: "God is punishing me for my sin!"

Brantôme relates, with a pleasant naïveté, that this was the origin of the ladies at the court of France. Queen Anne of Brittany had previously made "her court of ladies greater than the other preceding queens," but this went for nothing at the court of Francis I, who, "considering that the ornament of the heart is ladies, desired to people his court with them more than was the former custom." He remarked in this connection: "A court without ladies is a garden without any beautiful flowers, and rather resembles the court of a satrap or a Turk (where one does not see any ladies whatsoever) than it does that of a great and Most Christian King." In summoning thus to his court élite among the ladies and damsels, Francis I had in mind the suppression, if one is to credit Brantôme, of that dissolute and dangerous band of women whom the kings of France had kept in their suite, and whom the Master of the Revels was charged with lodging, watching over and governing. We have seen, as a matter of fact, that the last Master of the Revels fulfilled the functions of his office at the beginning of Francis I's reign. But we have proved, by authentic documents, that he was replaced about this period by a "mistress of the daughters of joy following the court," an intimate host, traces of which remain down to Charles IX. Brantôme still insists that the *cour des dames* was destined especially, at least in intention, to replace these "daughters of joy following the court," who had become more and more redoubtable since the invasion of the venereal maladies. "It seems to me," remarks Brantôme seriously, "that public whoredom, accompanied as it commonly is by syphilis, cannot be so good as that secret and discreet place where our ladies, who are very clean and healthy, may reside, at least some of them, and where they need not render gentlemen impotent as those of the brothels do."

Thus then, according to the statements of Brantôme, this courtly Prostitution had been not only foreseen and approved by Francis I from the hygienic point of view, but also from the moral point of view, since the King remarked "that the ladies rendered the gentlemen of his court as villainous as their swords." This was not the austere and sentimental Chivalry of the fourteenth century; it was a Chivalry, equally passionate no doubt, so far as the glory of arms was concerned,

but impatient to taste all the material joys and the grossest pleasures. Formerly, during the knightly ages, there had been but chaste and decent loves; at the court of Francis I, all the amours were carnal, at least in intention, a point which Brantôme does not fail to excuse in his own manner: "Supposing that the ladies," he says, "do favor some (I mean any) of their lovers and servants, what blame can the King have of that, since, without using force or violence, he leaves to each one the guard of his own garrison, in which, if anyone enter, he has no power, provided that in a frontier garrison, in time of war, it is permitted to every gallant man to enter, if he can." But the startling Prostitution at the King's court did not, unhappily, stop here; it cast a gloomy shadow over French society, and ended by devouring like a flame all that remained in the way of good manners among the bourgeoisie and the lower classes. Following is the remark made to Brantôme by a great Prince, who was not yet so corrupt as to deny the fatal consequences of this demoralization of the nobility: "If it were only," he objected, "that the ladies of the court were themselves debauched, that would be one thing; but they set such an example to the other ladies of France that the latter, modeling their habits, their graces, their fashions and their vices upon those of the court, seem also to be imitating the latter in matters of love and lechery, as though to say: 'At the court they dress thus, they dance thus, they commit lechery thus; and we can do the same!'" . . . "Do you mean to say," replies Brantôme, "that before the reign of King Francis, there were no whores throughout all France, great, medium, small and common ones, and as many in their own countries and houses as elsewhere! I conclude, notwithstanding all these amours, that nothing was ever better than the introduction of the *cour de dames*, and might it please God that I were at that great King's court for my own pastime!"

Francis I, who had made of his court a sort of seraglio, in which he did not mind his gentlemen sharing with him the favors of his ladies, set those gentlemen at once an example of and a lesson in libertinism; he did not blush at becoming, at need, the accomplice in illegitimate loves, for he desired that everyone should have the same weaknesses as himself. "During his reign," says Sauval, "if one were without a mistress, it was looked upon as bad for his court; no one had a mistress but His Majesty desired to know her name, obliging himself to speak for them, to aid them by his recommendation, and to serve them in all encounters. Finally, if he met such persons together,

he had to know the remarks which were being exchanged, and if these remarks did not impress him as being sufficiently gallant, he would teach them in what fashion they ought to converse." Thus, the King was not satisfied with being a preceptor in gallantry, though, indeed, he might boast of knowing the trade well; but he accepted, in the interest of his friends, the rôle of procurer, a rôle which all the courtiers were only too ready to take upon themselves in order to gratify his royal whims. It was said of him that he would not permit a woman to keep her virtue at the court. Nevertheless, he prided himself upon being the staunchest of defenders of feminine honor, and he regarded as a crime the least pleasantry which appeared to offend that honor, even though it were a bit tarnished already.

One day, he conceived a capricious desire to witness the rutting of deer, and conducted the most coquettish (*coquettes*) of his court to a spot in the forest of Saint-Germain, where the stags and deer assembled during their amorous season. The novelty of the spectacle was calculated to offend the modesty of these ladies, if they had had any left; but they did not even change countenance, and it was possible to remark to them, smilingly, "the pastime and all the caresses of these animals." A courtier who had been present at the fête had the imprudence to remark that, at sight of this congress of deer, "his mouth had watered." The King was so enraged at the malicious author of this epigram that he exiled him from the court and never would consent to his being recalled. Another time, he became still more indignant at the young Brisambourg, whom he had charged, during the Lenten season at the château de Meudon, with the task of bearing a few platters of food from his table to that of the Duchess of Etampes and the ladies of her company, who were known as the "little band"; Brisambourg permitted himself to remark: "These ladies are not content with eating meat in Lent; they also eat cooked meat and cannot get enough of it!" This remark, reported to the ladies of the "little band," excited their indignation to such a point that they complained to the king, and Francis I, beside himself with anger, ordered the untimely jester to be seized and brought to justice without any formalities. The poor Brisambourg had the good grace to flee, and he later was restored to the king's favor, after having made honorable amends to the "little band" of the Duchess of Etampes. This was a period of great favor for this mistress of the King, and all the appointments among the magistrates, the officers of

finance and the army were made in accordance with her choice, from amongst her relatives, friends and flatterers. The Duchess even boasted of being able to dispose of the papacy and the sacred college, which were in a position to refuse her nothing; she obtained in this manner the cardinal's hat for six or eight of her preachers, and she remarked, on this point, that it was no more difficult for a woman to make a cardinal than to make a cuckold.

Francis I, who appeared to be so jealous of the honor of ladies when a man dared to attack the latter in words, was not the least scrupulous regarding the free and indecent expressions of which the ladies themselves made use without shame. We may find a specimen of the courtly language in the smutty poems of the "royal" poets, who did not find in the technical language of Prostitution a single word, a single image, which they did not dare to employ in poetic language. There are a multitude of anecdotes related by Brantôme which bear witness to this horrible license of language and literature. Indeed, no more reserve might be expected of a depraved court which found its chief amusement in the reading of the works of Rabelais, and which sought in those works less the admirable genius of the master than it did gross puns and dirty jokes. And yet, it is difficult to understand how Clément Marot, valet de chambre and secretary to the beautiful Marie, Queen of Navarre, could have diverted the *sucrées* of the court by rhyming (*rythmoyant*) the disgusting loves of Alix and Martin. An encounter which Brantôme pictures as very diverting impresses us rather as bearing the imprint of the times, and as being more characteristic than any other of the abandonment of the ladies and damsels of the court. Louise de Clermont-Tallard, whom Francis I called his Grenouille (frog) (Marot does not tell us why), was looked upon as the greatest wit at court;

*Car rien qu'esprit n'est la petite blonde,**

as Clément Marot said, who addresses to her a very lively epigram, declaring that this young woman is "second to none other." Brantôme also says that, from her youth, she "had done many pleasant things and uttered many *bons mots*." When Pope Paul III, in 1528, had an interview with the King of France at Nice, Madame de Clermont-Tallard went to prostrate herself before the Holy Father and to demand of him absolution "for the sport she had had," telling him

**Translator's Note:—"For the little blonde is nothing but wit."*

how, "when Pope Clement VII came to Marseilles, she being then still Mademoiselle Tallard, had taken one of her pillows and had wiped with it her front and rear, after His Holiness had reposed on it his weary head and face and mouth which she had kissed." (See the *Dames Galantes*, Disc. VI.)

The King constantly had an official mistress, whom he preferred to all others; but one was not enough, for he insisted upon giving free reign to his whims, even during his tenderest and most lasting amours. It was the Duchess of Etampes who was really his favorite during a large part of his reign, but he more than once, by her side and under her eyes, set up other mistresses, who were commonly known as the "lieutenants of Madame Anne," and whom the latter did not endeavor to dethrone, certain as she was of holding her own in the face of all the King's inconstancies. Anne of Pisseleu, who was commonly known as Mademoiselle de Heilly before she was married by the King and dowered with the Duchy of Etampes, had not begun her relations with Francis I until 1526, at the very moment when the prisoner of Pavia was leaving Spain to return to France. The Queen Regent, Louise of Savoy, going to meet her son, showed the latter the gracious favor of presenting to him this maid of honor with whom she proposed to replace the King's former mistress, having quarreled with the latter. This mistress, whom the demoiselle de Heilly had no difficulty in supplanting at first sight, was the Countess of Châteaubriant, the celebrated Françoise de Foix, who was to pay with her life for her tenderness and devotion to the King. Françoise de Foix, beautiful and accomplished as she was, could not hold for long the changeful heart of her royal *mainteneur*; she loved him with too great a delicacy, which she displayed clearly enough when the faithless one demanded of her the return of the jewels adorned with amorous emblems and devices which he had given her; she caused the jewels to be smelted and made back into nuggets, saying that she had retained the devices in her memory. The Duchess of Etampes was far from desiring to imitate this exquisitely sentimental refinement; it may be doubted even if she had a true love for the King, who felt drawn to her always by a very lively attraction, which she knew how to maintain and to revive incessantly, with an art which the cleverest of courtezans might have envied.

La belle Heilly, as Francis I for a long time called her, thus indulged in a refined and ingenious Prostitution, which served not merely to

better the fortune of this clever mistress, but also aided that of all her family and of a throng of protégés whom she was constantly recommending to the King's favor. The Duchess of Etampes did not interfere in the least with the fancies of Francis I, who was always running in quest of adventures but who always returned to her, without her ever appearing to perceive his infidelities, although she had been, upon a number of occasions, gravely inconvenienced in the matter of her health. She had herself cured, but the King was never cured completely. Nothing was better known at court than the liaison between the Duchess of Etampes and the King, although the latter, in order to hide the amour, imposed precautions and obstacles which only rendered their affair the more intriguing. Thus, when he was in public with her, he avoided everything which might savor of familiarity; he did not depart from the most ceremonious gallantry, and when he visited her in person, he spared nothing to see that his visits remained unknown to all the world. He only came to the Duchess' apartments by means of subterranean passages and secret staircases; or else he came by night and in disguise, alone or followed by a captain of his guards. Woe to the unfortunate one who might have recognized the King and betrayed his secret! The Duchess of Etampes did not lodge ordinarily in the King's household, but opposite the royal palace or near by, in such a manner as to be the more free to communicate with her lover. Francis I gave her a lodging which bore her name, and which was situated opposite the Hôtel des Tournelles, where he ordinarily sojourned; they might, in this manner, avoid frequent rendezvous at the hôtel d'Etampes, without anyone suspecting their presence at the hôtel des Tournelles. In order to be still freer in his mysterious interviews with his mistress, the King had caused to be constructed, at the extremity of the Quai des Augustins, near the Pont Saint-Michel, a small hôtel which later became the hôtel de Luynes. The Duchess of Etampes, for her part, purchased a house neighboring this one in the rear, and situated in the rue de l'Hirondelle, so that these two houses, which appeared to be independent of each other, in reality formed but a single one, facilitating the cohabitation of the two lovers. It was to this house that the King would go to shut himself up for days at a time, under pretext of seeking repose from the cares of government, and the Duchess would come to him thus in hiding, when it was generally believed that she was absent from Paris, and on a journey. We may look upon the house in the rue de

l'Hirondelle as the origin of those *petites maisons* which were to become so common in Paris a few centuries later. "It would appear clearly enough," says Sauval, "that this was a palace of love, or the house of little pleasures, (*maison des menus plaisirs*) for Francis I." This house, in the time of Sauval (about 1660) still preserved a part of its interior and exterior decorations, which were reminiscent of the purpose of the place; the walls were covered with sculptured ornaments, among which were to be remarked the salamander of Francis I: this fabulous emblem of his inextinguishable loves had been reproduced in all nooks and corners, with a great variety of monograms and devices. There was to be seen everywhere a flaming heart between the alpha and omega, signifying that love was the beginning and the end of all the royal acts. Some forty years later, vestiges of the carvings and paintings were visible in this house, which the inhabitants of the quarter still traditionally referred to as the "King's house."

Francis I, thanks to these delicate precautions, kept up appearances so well with regard to the Duchess of Etampes, who was married to Jean de Verosse, but who did not live with him, that this lady always was in a position boldly to deny that she was the King's mistress. Her husband knew well enough how matters stood, for, if we are to accept the account given in a certain passage of the *Dames Galantes*, which designates him without naming him, he came one night to his wife's room with the intention of surprising the King and killing him; but Francis I had time to draw his sword and, threatening the importunate fellow, proceeded to put him out of doors, enjoining him to do no evil to his wife, under pain of death; after which, "he resumed his place and reassured the lady, the best he could, for the fright which she had had." The King had frequently to employ the same "safeguards" in the interests of those ladies who gave him a good reception when he came to them suddenly in the middle of night: a fact of which the husbands were not ignorant, although the latter bore philosophically the hardships which appeared to go with a courtier's life; for at the Hôtel des Tournelles, at the Louvre, and in all the royal palaces, the King had seen to it that he had the means of entering, at all hours, the apartments of whatever ladies and damsels he pleased. There was no scandal, since the walls had neither eyes nor ears; the victims of these nocturnal ambushades were careful to see that no echoes of their shame escaped, and moreover, the King's own domestics were accustomed to see nothing, to hear nothing, to say

nothing. The ladies were, thus, property of the court; the King, as Sauval remarks, "has the keys of their chambers and enters there by night, at such hour as he will, without any disturbance, or making any noise." It is to be understood that the husbands, the fathers, the brothers and the lovers of these ladies were so far away that they could not hear the cries which expired in the thickness of walls and the depths of upholsteries. "When the ladies," adds Sauval, "in order to be virtuous, refuse those apartments which the King offers them at the Louvre, at the Tournelles, at Meudon, or elsewhere, it is necessary for their husbands to walk very straight; if they happen to hold government offices, and if it is possible for them to be accused of the least derilection, it is off with their heads; there is no mercy to be hoped for in their case, at least so long as the wives do not redeem their husbands' lives at the expense of their own honor."

Such was, assuredly, the most shameful form of Prostitution under the reign of Francis I, if we are to credit the statements of Sauval, who undoubtedly had access to many precious documents which we no longer possess. He states expressly that nothing was commoner than this courtly Prostitution. If the ladies who had husbands, relatives or friends to save them were not beautiful and their daughters were, these latter obtained, at their own risk and peril, grace for the condemned ones. Francis I paid no attention to offers of money made to him to sign letters of remission, but if the wives and daughters of the unfortunates "came then to offer themselves, he did not fail to take them at their word, provided they possessed youth, beauty or virtue." The condemned whose heads had been saved at this price were not always grateful towards their wives and daughters; sometimes they would not pardon the latter for a sacrifice from which they themselves had profited. There was much talk at this time of the grace which Francis I had accorded to the Seigneur of Saint-Vallier, when the daughter of this gentleman, the beautiful Diane of Poitiers, came to hurl herself at the King's feet, beseeching his Majesty to pardon her father, who had been condemned as an accomplice of the Constable of Bourbon. The King could refuse nothing to Diane, who also refused nothing to him. Saint-Vallier was already on the scaffold, in the Place de Grève, when Francis I suspended execution and commuted the death penalty into life imprisonment. The beneficiary had sufficient presence of mind to remark, as he descended from the scaffold: "May God save the good case* (*cas*) of my daughter (Sauval

**Translator's Note*:—Literally, "match."

says *coq* and Brantôme something else) who has so well saved me!" This Diane of Poitiers, who had employed her beauty with so much filial respect, was, by the way, the "King's mare" (*jument du roi*), as the people nicknamed her, according to the commentators of Rabelais; but to continue the metaphor, she soon entered the stables of the young Dauphin, who was to become Henri II, and who lost no time, when he ascended the throne, in making her the Duchess of Valentinois. The reign of the Duchess of Etampes thus came to an end with that of Francis I.

If Prostitution during this reign assumed at court proportions more audacious than ever before, we still must recognize the fact that Francis I, by his example and his lessons, had put politeness and gallantry in the mode, as veils destined to cover the scandal of illegitimate loves. Mézeray, in his *Histoire de France*, gives us an energetic picture of that corruption which, he says, "began during the reign of Francis I, became almost universal during that of Henri II and reached its highest point under Charles IX and Henri III." But Mézeray, in pointing out the different degrees of moral depravity, following Francis I down to the time of Henri III, has failed to remark that the first of the Valois was the implacable enemy of scandal and the obstinate protector of what he called "the honor of ladies." Francis I did not recognize or compromise any of his innumerable mistresses, and the Duchess of Etampes herself, who for more than twenty years had been the accredited favorite, might defend herself against the charge of having sold her virtue and maintain that she had been in all honor, a "friend" (*amie*) or a "sister" (*soeur d'alliance*) to the King. "Although there may have been some suspicion less honest than necessary of this relation," says Duverdier, Sieur de Vauprivas, in his *Prosopographie*, "the King himself freed it of suspicion by protesting that he only loved this lady for her grace and gayety. However this may be, it was well known that he made use of her in his bed." The Sieur de Vauprivas, who wrote and published his *Prosopographie* in the time of Henri III does not appear to be any too convinced of the innocence of the relations between the Duchess of Etampes and the King. He undoubtedly knew that, from Francis I's death, the Duchess' husband, whom Verillas depicts for us as being of an "insensible humor and little subject to the pleasures of love," had himself published his own dishonor by instituting proceedings against his wife in money matters, and by provoking a judicial inquiry, the result of which had

been the establishment of the point that he had married the "King's whore" (*putain du roi*).

Francis I was not content with making a seraglio of his court, a seraglio in which neither husband nor guardian, nor father nor mother might dare to spoil or disturb his pleasure; he also amused himself, occasionally, by frequenting places of ill fame (*courir le guilledou*) in the streets of Paris, in quest of adventure; in addition, he paid his addresses to the wives and daughters of the bourgeois; but we may see, from the *Heptameron* of the Queen of Navarre, that these nocturnal recreations were not without their dangers, and that on more than one occasion the King was treated like a vulgar gallant who had been caught in the act. His sword happily came to his aid in getting him out of tight places in which his naturally free-and-easy disposition had landed him. He did not always escape safe and sound from these hazards of love. Thus, it was an affair of this sort which gave him, according to persistent tradition, the malady of which he died, after ten or twelve years of suffering which he probably inflicted on his mistresses, likewise. The historians, in preserving this tradition, which has no authentic basis, have not failed to mention the alleged fact without vouching for it. Mézeray frequently borrows from the chronicles of his contemporaries the most curious details of his *Histoire de France*; according to him, the malign ulcer, which was the cause of Francis I's death began, about 1539, "to eat him away with unbearable pains, so that the pain and the infection, which were spread throughout his body, caused him a slow fever and a lassitude which rendered him incapable of any enterprise." "I have heard tell sometimes," adds Mézeray, "that he had contracted this malady from the beautiful Ferronnière, one of his mistresses, whose portrait is to be seen today in certain cabinets of curiosities, and that the husband of this woman, through a strange and stupid spirit of revenge, had sought this infection in a bad house in order to infect the both of them." Mézeray, in his *Abrégé Chronologique de l'Histoire de France*, again refers likewise with more detail to the same incident, basing his account upon a rumor which was current in the time of Francis I, as Sauval states, although Brantôme had not spoken of La belle Ferronnière and her husband, who was an iron merchant. according to some, an advocate according to others, and pitilessly jealous according to all.

This adventure, which must be accorded an important place in the

history of Prostitution, is related very explicitly for the first time in the *Diverses Leçons* of Louis Guion, Sieur de la Nanche (Volume II, Book I, page 109). The latter undoubtedly had it from the mouth of some old man who had lived during the reign of Francis I, for he compiled his collection at the end of the sixteenth century; moreover, in his capacity as a physician, he may have encountered among some of his confrères a special tradition relative to the venereal malady of which the King had been the victim. "This King" he says, "sought out the wife of an advocate of Paris, very beautiful and of good grace, whom I will not name, for she has left children provided with great estates, and who are folk of good renown; this lady never desired to yield her favors to the King, but on the contrary, repulsed him with many lewd words, at which the King was very greatly put out. Whereupon, certain courtezans and royal pimps (*maquereaux*) observed to the King that he might take her by authority and royal power. And as a matter of fact, one of them went to this lady, who told her husband. The advocate saw plainly enough that there was nothing to be done except for him and his wife to leave the realm; they would have found it hard to save themselves, if they had remained and had not obeyed. Finally the husband gave his wife permission to accommodate the King, and in order not to be in the way in this affair, pretended to have business in the country for eight or ten days. In reality, he remained in the city of Paris, and frequented the brothels in search of the *vérole* to give to his wife, to the end that the King might be taken with it, and he soon found what he sought, and infected his wife, and she afterwards the King, who gave it to many other ladies whom he was keeping, and who was never cured of it, for all the rest of his life he was unhealthy, downcast, and of an impossible disposition." Nothing impresses us as being better substantiated than this adventure with La belle Ferronnière so far as the unfortunate influence over the King's health is concerned; but at the same time, it impresses us as being futile to attribute to a husband's vengeance the shameful results of the King's own debauchery, since we know that the *grosse* or the *grande vérole* (one employed one or the other term) was then deeply rooted in the dens of public debauchery.

There is room merely for doubt as to the period at which Francis I became so gravely afflicted with the punishment of his own incontinence; for if Mézeray fixes a precise date by speaking of that "malign ulcer which came to him in the year 1539," Brantôme does not appear

to hesitate in assigning to the early years of Francis I's reign the invasion of that malady which shortened his life and which earned for him this famous epitaph:

*L'am mil cinq cent quarante-sept,
François mourut a Rambouillet
De la vérole qu'il avoit.**

"King Francis," says Brantôme, in his eulogy of Henri II, "also loved greatly and too much, for being young and free, he embraced now one, now another with indifference, since in those days one was not a gallant who did not carry his whorings everywhere; from which he took the *grant vérolle* which shortened his days. And he died of it at an early age, for he was but fifty-three years old, which was nothing; and he, after suffering much from this malady, was advised that if he continued his vagabond amours, he would be still worse; and like one who is wise with regard to the past, he set about making love very gallantly. And so, he set up his splendid court, frequented by beautiful and decent princesses, great ladies and damsels, to whom he did no wrong, in order to guarantee himself against villainous evils, and he no longer soiled his body with past ordures, but accommodated it to a love that was more salubrious, more genteel, clean and pure. And for his principal lady and mistress he took, after he had come back from prison,** Mademoiselle d'Heilly. . . ." This passage, in which Brantôme persists in giving an immoral origin to the "great court of ladies" (*grande cour des dames*) instituted by Francis I, would tend to establish the fact that La belle Ferronnière had left the King certain souvenirs before this Prince had been made a prisoner at the battle of Pavia in 1525. In another passage in his *Mémoires*, Brantôme agrees with himself and confirms this assertion, by remarking of Queen Claude, that "the King, her husband, gave her the *vérolle*, which shortened her days." Now Queen Claude died in the month of July, 1524, of the "ill treatment" (*mauvais traitement*) which she had received from the King. In order to gain an accurate picture of Prostitution at the court of Francis I, it would be necessary

*Translator's Note:—"In the year 1547, François died at Rambouillet of the *vérole*, which he had."

**Translator's Note:—For the manner of this imprisonment and a description of how the King was enabled to endure the tedium of it, see Balzac's Conte, *Le Jeune De Francoys Premier* (J. U. N.).

to cite textually half of the *Dames Galantes*, and to make the acquaintance by name of the personages whom Brantôme has not dared to name, in reporting their scandalous carryings-on in his book. But it would be very difficult today to lift the veil of anonymity which covers the majority of those gallantries which the discreet compiler attributes sometimes to a "great prince," sometimes to a "great princess," sometimes to a "beautiful widow," sometimes to a "*puissante dame*," whom he does not designate otherwise, undoubtedly for the reason that the good tongues of the court were on hand to beseech his silence. And so we do not believe it would be useful to assemble here those anecdotes which belong to the reign of Francis I and which reveal the depravity of manners among the nobility. However, it may be remarked that, if license was general, if married women made a sport of conjugal honor, if young girls preluded their marriage by forgetting all modesty, there was still among the men, even the most debauched, an elevated and austere sentiment of what the virtue of a wife or the mother of a family ought to be. These husbands, who did not fear to defile the couch of another, looked well enough after their own, sword or dagger in hand. From this resulted so many tragic stories, in which an illicit or adulterous love found an end in poison or the dagger. These bloody revenges which threatened married women were, it is likely, none too efficacious in keeping the latter in the line of duty; for Brantôme gives us to understand that this was for them but one spur the more, exciting them to brave the danger and to surpass one another in astuteness and in the art of deceiving their husbands.* "Always," he says, after having roundly cursed out those "dangerous, weird, cruel, bloody and umbrageous cuckolds" who strike, torment, and slay their infamous wives, "always have I known ladies and their servants who gave little heed to the matter, for they (the husbands) were as bad as the others, and the ladies were so courageous that if courage were lacking in their servants, they would restore it, for the reason that the more perilous the enterprise the greater should be the generosity in executing it. Other such women have I also known who had no heart or ambition for attempting high things (*choses hautes*), but who concerned themselves, always, with their low employments (*choses basses*) only; and so it is, one says: Cowardly of heart as a whore." (*Lasche de coeur comme une putain.*)

*Translator's Note:—"Love likes blood, Madame!" (*L'amour aime le sang, Madame!*) See Balzac's conte, *La Connestable*, which deals with this theme (J. U. N.).

It is difficult to believe, in reading the *Dames Galantes* of Brantôme, that this brazen historian of courtly immodesty desired to prove in all seriousness that there was nothing blameworthy in the *grandes et honnêtes dames*. This singular paradox is to be encountered in a number of his writings, in which he accuses different persons whom he does not appear to esteem any the less. It is impossible to imagine such a justification for the bad manners of the court. Thus, a Scotch lady of good family, says Brantôme, named Flammin, who had had by Henri II a natural son, remarked in her "Frenchified Scotch" (*en son escoceement française*): "I have done all that I could up to the happy hour when I became pregnant by the King, at which I feel myself highly honored and very happy; and I might say that the royal blood has something sweeter in it than any other, so well off do I find myself, without counting the good presents which I have gotten out of it." And Brantôme adds in the form of a commentary: "This lady, with others of whom I have heard tell, were of this opinion, that to sleep with the King was not a point of infamy, and that whores are those who give themselves to the small but not to great kings and gentlemen." Brantôme puts the same words into the mouth of a "great one" (*grand*), who discourses "on this same subject" (*de ce même propos*), in defense of a great princess who was very ardent in "satisfying the world" (*contenter le monde*), like the sun, "which scatters its light and its rays on everyone." He declares that these inconstancies are a fine thing and permissible in great ladies, "but not to other common ladies, of the court, the city or the country. . . . and such ladies of middle station," he adds with assurance, "must be constant and firm like fixed stars and in no wise erratic; when they become changeable, wander and vary in love, they are justly punishable, and they ought to be treated like whores of the brothels, since their beauty, while passable, is not one to be shed over a number." After this ingenious theory, we need not be astonished if a lady of the court, who was certainly a great dame, finds herself envying the "freedom" of the Venetian courtezans.

"Ah! my God!" she remarked to one of her companions, "would that we might transfer all our property there by letter of the bank and that we might go there to live that courtezan's life, pleasant and happy, to which none other can compare!" Brantôme, who reports this, cannot keep from exclaiming: "There is a pleasing wish and a worthy one!" but it is easy to see that he approves it in so great a lady.

Assuredly, the famous Roman courtesan, known as La Grecque, who came to France, according to Brantôme, to "train" the husbands there and to give lessons to their wives, might have addressed to the latter, without any scandal, such indecent language as this: "Our master is so warm when he is well taught that one takes a hundred times more pleasure in practicing with a number than with one." It was not merely the graduate courtezans who professed debauchery at the court of Francis I; but great ladies, great princesses, and princes of the Church also indulged in it at will; the Cardinal of Lorraine, who was the King's "good second" in affairs of gallantry, took upon himself the task of "training with his own hand" the new girls and ladies who arrived at the court. "What a trainer!" cries Brantôme, "I do not believe his task was so hard a one as training a wild colt." Then, after having praised the wisdom of the Cardinal *a l'endroit des dames*, he confesses that "few or none of them came out of that court good wives and girls!"

CHAPTER LXX

IF THE seraglio of Henri II," says Sauval, "was not so large as that of Francis I, his court was none the less corrupt." The *Mémoires* of Brantôme are there to confirm this corruption, which could have been carried to no higher a degree; for the court of France at this period had adopted and naturalized all species of Prostitution and debauchery, all the refinements of lust and gallantry, all the lessons of moral depravity which it previously had learned at the Italian courts. Brantôme applauds what he regards as a triumph and an improvement in the interest of the sensual pleasures: "As to our beautiful French women," he says in the first discourse of his *Dames Galantes*, "we have seen them in times past very gross and content to conduct themselves in gross fashion; but for the last fifty years, they have borrowed and learned from other nations so much gentility, so many endearments, attractions and virtues, so many habits, pretty graces and lascivious ways, for they themselves have so well studied how to fashion these things, that now it must be said that they surpass all the others in all fashions, and thus, as I have heard say, even among strangers, they are now worth more than the others, in addition to the fact that the words of lechery in French are more prurient in the mouth, better sounding and more moving than the others." Brantôme concludes from this that it is better to make love in France than elsewhere, and so, betakes himself to the "doctors in love" (*docteurs de amours*) and to the courtezans, who assuredly give the palm to the French ladies, although he is forced to recognize in the last analysis that, "there are whores everywhere and cuckolds everywhere, and chastity does not inhabit one region more than another."

Henri II, nevertheless, had less share than had Francis I in the depravation of his age, for if he "loved like the King, his father and other kings and was greatly given to ladies," as Brantôme says, he still set his courtiers a rare example of constancy and perfect love in his liaison with Diane of Poitiers, who was his one official mistress throughout the course of his reign. Diane was no longer young, but she was always beautiful, and Brantôme, who saw her at the age of seventy years, six months before her death, was struck with admiration at finding her "as beautiful of face, as fresh and as amiable as at

the age of thirty years." He adds that "she had especially a very white skin, and that without powdering herself at all," which led him to think that she must have made use of certain *bouillons composés d'or potable*. However this may be, Henri II loved her passionately, so passionately that he could not do without her and was sad when she was out of his sight; and so, she continued to live with him as "privately" as though she had been his legitimate wife, and the Queen was obliged to bear in silence the supremacy of her rival, who always avoided making her feel her humiliation. Henri II still cohabited with Queen Catherine, who appeared to have no other rôle than that of bringing into the world a great line of princes and princesses. Diane on her side, did not appear to be jealous of this prolific virtue, the result of which frequently was the prolonged absence of the King from the conjugal couch during the Queen's pregnancy; at such times, Diane was truly the only Queen at court, and remained so until Catherine de Medici had left her child-bed. She took an active part in the affairs of government, and it may be said that her influence was by no means an unfortunate one in politics for the reign of Henri II. "Happy is that king," exclaims Brantôme, "who meets a good mistress, perfect and well accomplished, as it is in his power well to choose, for, she being such, both he and his realm are none the worse off for it!"

But without accusing Diane of Poitiers of having exerted a pernicious influence over the manners of the court, it may be noted that she did nothing to make them better, either by her example or by her influence over Henri II. She undoubtedly was quite content with the unbridled license which reigned at court and which seemed ever to be making fresh progress, inasmuch as it tended to justify in the eyes of all her adulterous relations with the King; she might even, up to a certain point, justify her own conduct by comparing it with the prodigious carryings-on in which the greatest ladies about her permitted themselves to indulge, displaying thus a contempt for their own birth and rank. Henri II, whose love did not fail in point of delicacy so far as his favorite was concerned, spared no pains in preserving the brilliancy of this amour and in rendering it, in a manner, respectable, by surrounding it with respect and homage. That was why he had put up everywhere, in the ornaments of the palace, at the Louvre, at Fontainebleau and elsewhere, the figure of Diane interlaced with his own, along with the arms and devices of the goddess whom he adored.

These evidences of an enthusiastic tenderness and admiration were to be observed not merely in the interior decorations of the royal apartments, including those of the Queen, but also on the façades of public buildings, in the sculptures of windows and cornices, in the scrolls of locksmith work, in the panelings of doors and in the mosaics of court pavements. A point was made of displaying to all glances these anagrams made from the names of Diane and Henri. Never had adultery and Prostitution been given such an apotheosis.

The object which the King proposed was accomplished and even surpassed; not only was the court accustomed to associate the mistress with the King, but even the people were not far from looking on Madame Diane as a sort of magician, who owed to her art the fact that she kept always young and beautiful, and one whose symbol presided over the destinies of France. Henri had become so confirmed in this concubinage that he appeared to be proud of it, so that he did not even fear to be seen in public on horseback, with the Duchess of Valentino in front of him, with his arms fast about her. It might be said, however, that fashion authorized this variety of mount. We do not know whether it was Diane or Henri II who commanded the manufacture of an enamel representing the two lovers on horseback. Neither do we know whether the order to multiply the emblems of Diane on the royal battlements came from the favorite or from her lover. It has been thought, with some appearance of reason, that the artists, architects, sculptors, painters and others, perceiving the passion of Henri for this lady, had thought to flatter the sovereign by means of an allegory immortalizing his amour. The Italian artists undoubtedly took the initiative in this flattery, which pleased Diane and which did not displease the King; the French artists did not fail to follow suit, imitating what their rivals had so successfully done, and this became, from then on, a general habit in all works of art during this reign, the initials of Henri and Diane being reproduced with the crescent and the device: *Donec totum impleat orbem*. Was this an allusion, as has been stated, to the desire and the hope which the King had of seeing his mistress' belly become rounded out?

Henri II, following his fathers' example, was always very discreet regarding the honor of ladies; "He would not have it," says Brantôme, "that the ladies should be scandalized or divulged, so that he himself, who was of a sufficiently amorous complexion, when he went off to see the ladies, went there in the most hidden and secret manner

possible, in order that they might be beyond all suspicion and ill fame." But it is possible that the King did not take sufficient precautions to prevent the echoes of his infidelities from reaching the ears of Diane of Poitiers, who, on her side, took care that her own were not discovered. Brantôme confidently asserts that this lady, when she was in high favor, had "obliged so many persons in the matter of pleasures" that it might be said she was "*grande en tout*." Henri II did nothing but laugh, as though he felt no jealousy, for he knew that Diane had lovers but that he had no rival. One day, if we are to believe Brantôme and Sauval, the Duchess of Valentinois and the Maréchal de Brissac were together, when the King knocked at the door of the room. The door was not opened until Brissac had been hidden under the bed. The King went to bed and invited Diane to do the same, but he soon complained of hunger and arose. Diane, trembling all over, brought him sweetmeats; he ate them, and then of a sudden, threw the box under the bed, saying: "Take them, Brissac! Everybody must live." He left at once and never spoke of this adventure again, to Diane or to the Maréchal de Brissac, who at the moment had feared for his life. In a similar circumstance, Francis I had been less courteous with regard to the Admiral Bonnivet. The latter was not expecting the King, when Francis I came to his mistress' room while she was shut in with Bonnivet. The gallant merely had time to hide himself under the leaves which filled the chimney. Francis I took his place in the bed and appeared not to suspect the presence of a third party. Then he arose, under pretense of having to satisfy a need of nature, and went directly to the chimney, where he flooded with urine his poor rival, who did not dare to cry for mercy. But as soon as the King had left, the lady gave her lover a white shirt, perfumed his hair and beard, and did her best to make him forget his misadventure.

It would be necessary to quote a large part of Brantôme's *Dames Galantes* in order to describe by means of anecdotes that Prostitution which disgraced the court of Henri II. This Prostitution appears to us so horrible and so monstrous that we should readily tax the licentious narrator with hyperbole, if he appeared to be highly indignant at the turpitudes which he relates; but there are in his recitals so much naïveté and good humor that we are forced to recognize the fact that even the most abominable depravities were unable to astonish him or to make him blush. "While widows and wives were making love

extravagantly," says Sauval, who repeats Brantôme's stories with as much decency as the subject permits, "the young girls were doing the same. All this was done with a brazen face and the absence of all shame. As for the scrupulous, a number of them married the first comers, in order to be able to divert themselves afterward, without fear, with whomsoever seemed good to them." Brantôme gives us to understand that, in a majority of court marriages, the brides did not come as virgins to the nuptial couch, and that nearly all husbands learned that their wives had "been in the beds of some kings, princes, lords, gentlemen and many others." But these were but mere peccadilloes beside the incests which, according to him, were common enough in noble families, where the father, as a matter of course, did not marry off his daughter until he had dishonored her: "I have heard tell," he remarks, in the most unruffled fashion in the world, "of many other fathers, and especially of one very great, who had no more conscience where their daughters were concerned than the cocks in Aesop's fable." After such infamies, which Brantôme was unable to report without horror and without disgust, one is tempted to see nothing but an innocent maiden in that "very beautiful and honest damsel" who remarked to her servant: "Wait a little until I am married, and you shall see, under that marriage curtain which hides everything, how well off we shall be!"

"As to the brazen ones," says Sauval, "some defiled themselves with pleasures before their marriage, while others had the cleverness to divert themselves in the presence of their governesses and even their mothers without being perceived; then, to conceal the mystery, they would have recourse to execrable means; others (and this was very common among the young girls and the widows) made use of certain little trinkets, such as the four which Catherine de Medici found in the strong box of one of her maids of honor." It was the Italy of the Borgias and Medici which had taught to France all these practices, the use of all these instruments of and stimulants to Prostitution; it was the court which always had a hand in these obscene sports; it was always the court which, ardently eager to make use of these obscene innovations, accredited them and popularized them throughout the nation, where there soon remained nothing of the old Gallic innocence.

It must be remarked with regret that the arts, which should have for object the stimulation of souls by means of all that is noble and pure, were first among the corrupters, or at least among the auxiliar-

ies to this general Prostitution. Francis I and Henri II summoned to their court a throng of Italian artists of great talent, but of dissolute manners; the sculptors carved "statues of bronze and of marble, of men as well as of women, of gods and goddesses, in which lubricity triumphed;" the painters filled "the apartments of our kings with paintings and with pictures in which were represented things not only lascivious but incestuous and execrable." Leonardo da Vinci, Benvenuto Cellini, Primaticcio, Nicolo dell' Abbate, Rosso and their pupils were no more reserved in France than they had been in their own country, where the brush and the chisel appeared to be accomplices of all the distractions of the senses. The greatest artists of the Renaissance submitted to the depraved tastes of their contemporaries, and they displayed a deplorable emulation in the matter of immodest works of genius. Greek and Roman Priapi were scattered everywhere under all forms, so audaciously that it seemed France herself had become pagan and that her women were no longer able to blush.

The castles and the palaces of the kings, the houses of pleasure of the princes and the princesses, the dwellings of lords and individual homes were invaded by indecent pictures and frescoes. "To give a brief sketch of some of these paintings," says Sauval, who may have seen them with his own eyes, "here are men and gods, wholly naked, dancing and doing something still worse with women and with goddesses, who are also wholly naked. There, some are exposing to the eyes of their gallants that which nature has taken so much pains to hide. Others are debasing themselves with eagles, swans, ostriches and bulls. In many places are to be seen Ganymedes, Sapphos and *belettes*; there are gods and men, women and goddesses, engaged in outraging nature, and plunging into the most abominable dissoluteness." After this, there is no room for astonishment at the incests and depravity which followed during the reigns of Charles IX and Henri IV. Sauval adds that at Fontainebleau the chambers, the halls and the galleries were all filled with these erotic paintings.

The same subjects were also represented in bas-relief in the apartments and embossed in the gardens of the royal houses; they were to be found likewise in the tapestries and on the furniture of all sorts. Brantôme in his *Dames Galantes*, devotes a number of pages, very diverting undoubtedly, to relating "the discourses, the thoughts, the manners and the words," of the ladies and girls of the court, who were in the habit of drinking from a silver beaker chased in gold and

adorned with obscene figures. This beaker, which was a veritable curiosity in those days, belonged to a Prince, who found amusement in putting it into the hands of guests at his table. It was, moreover, an artistic masterpiece and a "*grand spéciauté*," according to Brantôme, "the most elaborate, engraved and sigillated, which it was possible to see; on it had been engraved, gently and subtly, with the burin, a number of the Figures of Aretino, of men and women, and at the bottom of the cup and above also, the divers manners of cohabitation among the beasts."* The remarks of the fair drinkers, which Brantôme reports at length, are not without their value in showing us the brazenness of the court ladies: "Some would say, when asked what there was to laugh at, and what they had seen, that they had seen nothing but paintings, and that, for that matter, they would not mind drinking another time; while others would remark: 'As for me, I do not think of evil; paintings and what the eye sees do not soil the soul.' Others would say: 'The wine is as good as any other.' Others would affirm that it was as good a beaker to drink out of as any other, and that it satisfied the thirst as well as any other; some were criticised for opening their eyes as they drank; they would reply that they desired to see what they were drinking, fearing that it was not wine, but medicine or poison. Others being asked whether they took greater pleasure in seeing or in drinking, would reply: 'In both.' Some would observe: 'What beautiful grotesques!' Others: 'What pleasant mummeries!' Some would say: 'Look at the pretty pictures!' Others: 'What pretty mirrors!' " Brantôme is here evidently endeavoring to imitate those *propos des buveurs* which constitute one of the most joyous chapters in Rabelais' *Gargantua*.

We may judge from this anecdote that the Figures of Aretino were not less known in France than they were in Italy. It is even likely enough that the original plates of these Figures, which enjoyed so sorry a fame, had been secretly brought to Paris after the reign of Francis I,** and that they had remained there until the seventeenth century, when they were destroyed by a print-merchant. It is known

**Translator's Note*:—Each of Raimondi's designs represented a different *modus sexualis*, and Aretino, as he himself tells us, wrote his sonnets as a commentary on the engravings. Cf. Aretino's remark: "The beasts are more free than we!"

***Translator's Note*:—Francis I was himself a good friend of Aretino. It was he who gave Pietro his famous chain of gold. He also endeavored to inveigle Aretino into coming to the French court to reside, but Aretino, after due deliberation declined.

that the series of sixteen obscene figures, which had been engraved at Bologna by the famous Marcantonio Raimondi from the designs of Giulio Romano had appeared accompanied by sixteen infamous Italian sonnets from the hands of Pietro Aretino, under the title, *De Omnibus Veneris Schematibus*; whereupon Pope Clement VII had caused the engraver to be arrested and put in prison, and Raimondi, indeed, had come near being hanged or burned alive; but Pietro dei Medici saved his life, at the solicitation of Aretino, whom the Holy Father did not dare prosecute, and who was, moreover, in a place of security at Venice.* As to the painter, he would have been compromised in the proceedings, if he had not fled to Mantua, where he waited for the Pope to pardon him. Only a small number of the engravings had been struck off, and they were disputed by the great lords of Rome, and even by a number of the cardinals, but the copper plates had disappeared, and papal justice was unable to come at them. They were later brought to France, it would seem, and there many successive copies were made, which, however, were barely enough in number to gratify the unbridled libertinism of the sixteenth century, but which happily have disappeared entirely; for the destiny of such abominable works as these is not to survive the person who possesses them. That is why the existence of the original engravings has been so often debated and doubted; but the evidence of Brantôme appears to confirm the matter: "I have known," he says, "a good Venetian bookseller at Paris, who was called Messer Bernardo, parent of the great Aldus Manutius of Venice, who kept shop in the rue de Saint-Jacques, who told me and swore to me once that, in less than a year, he had sold more than fifty sets of the works of Aretino to married and unmarried people, and to women, of whom he named to me three who are great in the world, whom I shall not name, and he sent those works to them very well bound, under solemn oath that not a word was to be said about the matter.**

It is, at least, very probable that this Messer Bernardo (Bernardino Torresano or Turizan) possessed, about 1580, the original plates of

*Translator's Note:—His "*rocca sicura*." See Aretino's letters, *passim*, *et alib*.

**Translator's Note:—This is what, in the *Introduction* to my Aretino, I have referred to as the "conspiracy of shush" against Pietro. During his lifetime, Aretino was one of the most powerful men in the world, but the moment he had died, he became, De Sanctis tells us, "a name that was not mentioned in the presence of a lady." The ban has remained.

Marcantonio, and that he had come into them through Manutius, for the copper plates, which the papal police had not been able to discover when the engraver was on trial, had certainly been sent to Venice, where the publication of the most infamous books and engravings met with no judicial opposition, so great was the freedom, or rather the license, of manners in that city. The son of the great Aldus Manutius printed and published without repugnance the execrable writings of his friend, Pietro Aretino; it was undoubtedly they who prepared an Italian edition of the *De Variis Veneris Schematibus*; but all the copies of this edition had disappeared a long time since, burned by families after the death of those who had possessed the works, or destroyed by public order. As to copies of the French edition of Turizan, although they were more numerous than the others, the majority of them have also perished in the hands of those who once owned them. The severity of the rules governing book-shops in France during the seventeenth century undoubtedly prevented a new edition of the original engravings, and the latter remained hidden in the depths of some old store-house of pictures. For if the publications of obscene works under cover was frequent at this period, the Figures of Aretino were too well known to the magistrates for a book seller to dare to dispose of copies of them.

And yet, it would appear that an anonymous hand had added four plates to the sixteen that Marcantonio had engraved from the paintings of Giulio Romano. It may be supposed that these four new plates had been made after the designs of the same painter, and perhaps the same engraver, for in a letter of the 29th of November, 1527, Pietro Aretino sends to Signor Cesare Fregoso: *Il libro de i sonetti e de le figure lussuose*. Now there are more than sixteen sonnets, which means that there were more than sixteen Figures. The original number of the Figures and the sonnets was sixteen, but this number grew, and always under the inspiration of Aretino, who, in his brazen pride, was ambitious to surpass the ancient debauchees, since the book of Elephantis contains only nine Figures, as Martial informs us (*Sunt Illic Veneris Novem Figuræ*. Epigr. 43 of the VIIth book). Aretino did not stop there, and the number of Figures had been raised to thirty-five; he himself tells us so in his famous dialogue, *La Putana Errante*,* in which he treats doctorally *de i diversi congiunimenti*. After

*Translator's Note:—The work of Zoppino as scholarship as shown, not of Aretino. There has been, as our author goes on to indicate, much dispute about the exact

the time of Aretino, his work had been completed by the addition of a thirty-sixth and last figure, and the collection thus augmented was vulgarly known under the title of the "Thirty-Six Manners of Aretino" (*Trente-six Manières de l'Arétin*). Nevertheless, the learned Gross de Boze, who, altogether an academician as he was, having included in the great Catalogue of his fine library *La Corona de i Cazzi*, either because he possessed this counterfeit of the original work or because he had the hope of procuring it, does not mention more than twenty-three sonnets, and consequently, twenty-three Figures.

There were but twenty when they fell under the eyes of Felibien, and when the print-merchant Jollain broke the plates a short time afterward. Vasari, in his *Lives of the Painters*, also had spoken of but twenty figures. Chevellier tells us (*Origine de l'Imprimerie de Paris*, page 224) that the honest Jollain, knowing where these infamous plates were to be found, bought them for a hundred crowns, "with the design to destroying them," and that he did destroy them as a matter of fact, without drawing from them a single proof. "He always believed," adds Chevellier, "that it was the original plates, engraved by Marcantonio, which he had destroyed." There is room for astonishment that this collection, which was not rare in the time of Brantôme, since a book-shop in Paris sold fifty copies in less than a year, was of a sudden not to be found. Following, in our opinion, is the cause of the total disappearance of those copies which were in circulation in the sixteenth century, in France and in Italy. As soon as a man was in danger of death, word was sent to a priest, who came to assist the dying man and receive his confession and administer the last sacrament. Now the priest, by virtue of his ecclesiastic powers, would call upon the dying man to give up all the impious, heretical or obscene books which he might possess. They were either burned, or else the confessor took them away with him to destroy them himself. It is easy to understand how these books, in case the priest preserved them for himself, could not have survived their possessor. A warfare on forbidden books had been launched by the Catholic clergy from the

number of original Figures and Sonnets. The original number, undoubtedly, was sixteen. See Edward Hutton, "*Pietro Aretino, the Scourge of Princes*, London, Constable and Company, 1922," p. 253. J. U. N. adds: I take issue with Putnam in this. Romano's original twelve paintings were copies of those twelve masterpieces which decorated the walls of the Golden House of Nero. (See Fuchs.) They represented the twelve classical "attitudes" and were in a way, symbolical of the twelve labors of Hercules.

beginning of the Reformation, which attacked, especially by means of books, the Mass and the Pope. There was throughout all Catholicism a secret password which confessors *in extremis* have honored down to our day. The result has been that the heterodox writings of Calvin, among others his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, became almost as rare as the scandalous Figures of Aretino.

Brantôme indulges in a theological digression on the subject of these Figures, and proves that the friar named Benedicti, who wrote about this time his dogmatic and confessional work, knew them equally well. It is known that this book, translated and printed in French, at Lyons, in 1581, under the title, *La Somme des Péchés et le Remède d'Iceux*, was filled with ordures. Brantôme, in observing that the friar, Benedicti, "has very well written of all the sins, and shown that he has seen and read much," does not appear to be any more scandalized at this *Somme* than at the Aretino Figures. "All these forms and postures," he says, "are odious to God, so odious that St. Hieronymus has said: 'Whoever is too indecently amorous of his wife is an adulterous and sinful husband.' And since certain ecclesiastical doctors have spoken of it, I shall state the thing briefly in Latin, especially since they themselves have not cared to say it in French: *Excessus*, they say, *conjugum fit, quando uxor cognoscitur ante retro, stando, sedendo a latere, et mulier super virum.*" The treatise of Benedicti, at the time it appeared, had for object the enlightening of young confessors on certain sins, which were new in the old catalogue of cases of conscience, but which came up daily before the tribunal of penitence.

The civil authorities winked at those plastic obscenities which might with impunity be executed, sold, possessed, and even exposed to the view of all; we do not see, in the sixteenth century in France, a single painter or engraver of erotic subjects being punished, whereas Pope Sixtus V, according to Brantôme, caused to be hanged a secretary of the Cardinal d'Este, named Capella, who had represented "from the life" (*au vif*) and had painted *au naturel* the amours of a great man and a beautiful lady of Rome.* The obscene painters ran less risks at the court of France. Brantôme cites one, but without mentioning his name, who had been guilty of a worse offense than Capella, in the

**Translator's Note*.—Hanging for writing or publishing an obscene work was no unusual punishment. Nicolo Franco, Aretino's secretary and later his bitter enemy, was finally hanged by order of Pope Pius V (St. Pius) for publishing the *Priapeia*. Hutton, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

time of Henri I: "A gentleman whom I have heard named, and whom I have known, made, one day, a present to his mistress of a book of paintings, in which there were thirty-two ladies, great ones of the court, painted *au naturel*, couched and playing with their servants, painted in the same fashion and *au naïf*. Some there were who had two or three servants, some more, some less. And these thirty-two ladies represented more than twenty-seven Figures of Aretino, all diverse. The personages were so well represented and *au naturel* that it seemed they were talking and acting: some unclad and naked, the others clad, with the same robes, coiffures, adornments and vestments that they commonly wore, and in which one sometimes saw them. The men were the same. In brief, this book was so curiously painted and done that there remained nothing to say of it except that it cost from eight to nine hundred crowns and was all illuminated." Brantôme relates that the sight of this book of images produced dangerous effects upon the women who amused themselves by looking at it; he cites one who "was so ravished and entered into such an ecstasy of love and of ardent desire," that she was unable to look beyond the fourth one and fell in a swoon at the fifth. We should like to believe, for the honor of these ladies, that it was shame that produced this fainting fit.

In another passage in the *Dames Galantes*, Brantôme speaks once more of these lubricious paintings, which had come into vogue under Francis I: "Such paintings and pictures," he says, with more reason and decency than he commonly shows, "exert more effect upon a fragile soul than one might think." The Count of Châteauevillain had in his gallery, among the rare and beautiful pictures which composed it, one of these libidinous paintings, "where were represented very beautiful ladies naked at the bath, touching, feeling, handling and rubbing each other, mingled together and groping each other and, what is more, doing their hair so nicely and so properly, while making a show of everything, that the coldest of recluses or of hermits would have been warmed and greatly moved." A great lady of the court who visited the gallery and who had paused before this picture, remarked to her lover: "It is too close here! Let us go to the coach at once and go to my lodgings, for I cannot contain this ardor; it must be extinguished; it is too burning!" It was the husbands who were to be accused of the Prostitution of their wives, for they spared nothing in corrupting the latter. "Some of them," says Brantôme, "whore more with their wives than do the ruffians with the wenches of the brothels."

They did not blush to bring into their own households, such books, such prints, such obscene paintings, which tended to make of the purest wife a shameless courtesan, and which provided energetic stimulants to adultery. "Today," wrote Brantôme, at the end of the reign of Henri III, "there is no longer need of these books or these paintings, for their husbands teach them enough, that is the sort of school these husbands keep!" It is certain that only too often the husbands themselves, in the guise of a *livre d'heures*, would give their wives the book of Aretino *en figures*. Brantôme mentions a lady, *belle et honnête*, who had one in her library; a gentleman, who was in love with her, no sooner learned of this circumstance than he at once augured favorably the success of his amour, and, in short, "he had his way with her and found in her what she had learned in the way of good lessons and practices."

What more could be added, by way of making clear the frightful debauchery of an age in which even the conjugal couch had lost its veils of modesty? It was at this period, nevertheless, that many scrupulous men, who belonged, it is true, to the middle classes of society, were effacing from or cutting out of their books every filthy and indecent passage, doing away with indecent engravings or covering nudity with ink; this is why we have so many incomplete or mutilated volumes, bearing witness to the chaste and virtuous censorship of their former readers or owners.

CHAPTER LXXI

THE reign of Catherine de Medici, that is to say those of her three sons, Francis II, Charles IX and Henri III, who were Kings in turn under her tutelage and regency, that long reign, filled with civil wars, religious troubles and bloody massacres, introduces us to a new phase in the history of Prostitution. Catherine de Medici conceived the idea of applying Prostitution to politics; she made of it an arm to conquer her enemies; she made use of it as a narcotic to put them to sleep, as a chain to enslave them, and as a poison to destroy them. Never before, perhaps, had immorality had recourse to such refinements; never had the art of governing men stooped to the employment of means so shameful. Machiavelli himself would have blushed at erecting into a permanent system what had been, until then, but a very exceptional accident in politics. Women, it is true, in certain cases, had exercised a notable influence in the affairs of State; they had undoubtedly, in all times, caused to be felt about them the influence of their seductiveness, but it was Catherine de Medici who, for the first time, at least at the court of France, had her maids of honor trained and well taught to become, at need, the disrespectable tools of her political designs.

The general corruption of the court at this period is a fact which it would be futile to attempt to prove by means of examples; this corruption, to which Catherine de Medici had not personally contributed, was not, as Bayle states (*Oeuvres*, Volume II, page 17), an effect of the political policy of this Queen, for her husband, Henri II, had left her nothing to do in this regard, but she made use of the existing state of affairs to the profit of her own Machiavellian designs. "Before this reign," says Mézeray, in his *Abrégé Chronologique de l'Histoire de France*. "it was the men who, by their example and by their persuasion, seduced the women into gallantry; but after amours (*amourettes*) had come to constitute the greater part of the intrigues and mysteries of State, it was the women who came to excel the men in this particular." Here we have a certain change in gallant strategy, with Catherine de Medici acting as the exceedingly clever tutor to the ladies and damsels who composed her court, and who formed a band (*bande*), which was then known as "the Queen's Flying Squadron" (*l'escadron volant de*

la reine). Catherine, during her husband's lifetime, had become acquainted with these new tactics when, having no children as yet and fearing to be repudiated, she had won over (*gagné*), in the words of Henri Estienne, the beautiful Diane of Poitiers, "so that the latter might keep her in grace with Monsieur le Dauphin, her husband, and she did not shame to play the part of a procuress in order to arrive at her intention." (See *Disc. Merveilleux de la Vie, Actions et Déportements de Cath. de Médicis*.)

We are lacking in precise information on the subject of this famous Flying Squadron, which we only know through some of its exploits. But all the historians are agreed in admitting its existence, if not its erotic organization, and Brantôme who is more discreet than ordinarily upon this delicate point, says enough to enable us to appreciate all the aid which the Queen's maids of honor were in a position to render her political policy. "A famous prelate of our court assures us," says Sauval, "that Catherine de Medici had a seraglio of coquettes, whom she carried with her, like a lot of firebrands, to snatch from the hearts of princes and lords of the realm their most secret thoughts, and that these were well enough able to corrupt the chiefs of the party in 1579, and above all Henri IV, and that they, by their cajolery, seduced the leaders of Religion into a new civil war, which was called the 'War of the Amorous' (*Guerre des amoureux*)." The "famous prelate" whom Sauval cites is none other than Brantôme, who certainly must have described the prowess of the Flying Squadron, in those Memoirs of his which we no longer possess. Those which we do possess, contain, it is true, many anecdotes relative to the *dames et filles* whom Catherine had enrolled in this amorous militia; but he excuses himself for not naming the heroines of the pleasing tales which he has collected in his *Dames Galantes*: "I speak of some," he says, "of whom I hope to tell good tales in this book before I am done, but the whole so modestly and without scandal that one shall perceive nothing, for the whole shall be covered with the veil of silence, so far as their names are concerned, and if any of these shall themselves read these tales, let them not be put out, for amorous pleasure cannot endure forever, on account of many inconveniences, changes and unforeseen circumstances; but at least the memory of a former past can still content us."

Brantôme does not commit the fault of giving, in his *Dames Illustres*, the list of ladies and damsels who, in his opinion, cast so

much éclat upon the court of the Queen Mother; he addresses them collectively in eulogies capable of making any blush who might have preserved a remnant of modesty. "All this company which I have named," he says, "need not reproach themselves with any loss of their time, for all beauty is here abundant, all majesty, all gentleness, all good grace, and very happy is he who may have been affected by the love of such ladies, and very happy also he who may have escaped (*escapar*). And I swear to you that I have not named any of these ladies and damsels who were not very beautiful, agreeable, and well accomplished, and all well equipped to set fire to all the world. Thus, when they were in their prime, they have burned up a good part of us gentlemen of the court, as well as others who approached their flames; while to many they have been gentle, amiable, favorable and courteous." Brantôme previously had had occasion to explain what he meant by the courtesy of these fair ones: "Thus I believe that the best time they have ever had was when they were maidens, for it was in their free choice to be religious if they chose, to belong to Venus or Diana, but they had the wisdom and the cleverness to preserve the shape of their bellies."

This was what the Queen demanded of them, and undoubtedly she got what she wanted, this wise and clever Queen, well schooled in all the effective devices (*bons engins*) for avoiding this mishap of war. She was always pitiless when the mishap occurred. She drove from her court Mademoiselle de Limeuil, the most beautiful of her waiting women, who "had spared nothing to serve her mistress" as Mézeray says, but who, after having seduced and enslaved the Prince of Condé, head of the Protestant party, had the awkwardness to find herself "inconvenienced for nine months," as the grave Mézeray also remarks, and she one fine day gave birth in the Queen Mother's wardrobe. There was composed upon this subject a Latin *pasquil*, which begins thus:

*Puella ista nobilis,
Quae erat amabilis
Commisit adulterium
Et nuper fecit filium;
Sed dicunt matrem reginam
Illi fuisse Lucinam.
Et quod hoc patiebatur*

Ut principem lucraretur:
At multi discunt quod pater
*Non est princeps, sed est alter. . . . **

The *Dixcours Merveilleux de la Vie de Catherine de Médicis* relates that the Prince of Condé being prisoner at the court of France in 1561, the demoiselle of Limeuil was one of the maidens whom the Queen "had sent to him to debauch him, a very laudable ambition, providing that she attained her designs." When the Queen attempted to reproach her for her accident, in 1564, "Limeuil had the boldness to tell her that she had, in this, merely followed the example of her mistress and accomplished the latter's bidding." Mademoiselle de Rouet, the companion and friend of Mademoiselle de Limeuil, played her *rôlet* better, when the Queen charged her with the duty of winning over the King of Navarre and of "amusing him thoughtfully with the pleasures of the court," according to the expression of Henri Estienne. This was, according to Aubigné, in the *Confession de Sancy*, a species of fishing with nets which Catherine de Medici employed upon the sea of politics: "When the waters were not too greatly troubled, they fished for the sleepy ones; and in this they did not spare the Indian berry (*coque de Levant*), which is furnished by the druggists of Italy. By this means, the mightiest were taken, like the Marshals of Montmorency and Cosée. After which, they lay in wait for still bigger fish: by this means, Antoine de Bourbon, King of Navarre, was taken by Rouet and Louis de Bourbon by Limeuil, but the latter victim, being vigorous and aware that he had been taken, broke the meshes and escaped. Yet other fish were lost in the wake of the Dauphins, like the dog fish, the brill, the mackerels and all the small fry who follow the court."

It is to be divined that, among this *compagnie* of ladies and maids, to the number of two or three hundred, who lived together, and who did not quit one another's company day or night, the prevalent depravity of manners soon led to the most scandalous disorders, which were not so secret but Brantôme dares to reveal and even to excuse them in his *Dames Galantes*. Sauval merely mentions, with as much decency as possible, those turpitudes which the historian of the *Dames*

**Translator's Note:*—"A certain noble damsel who was amorous committed adultery and recently gave birth to a son; and they say, the Queen Mother played the part of Lucina. She went through all this to win a prince; but there are many who say, the father is not a prince but another."

Galantes is pleased to describe in detail, with his usual cynicism: "Just as the men had found a way of doing without women," says Sauval, "the women had found a way of doing without men. A great Princess loved one of her demoiselles because she was an hermaphrodite. Paris, as well as the court, was filled to overflowing with Lesbian women, whom their husbands held all the more dear for the reason that with them they might live without jealousy. Some, without hiding the matter, might have reared weasels, which the ancients employed as hieroglyphs to signify low women (*tribades*); others would get themselves in heat with their adorers, without, however, being willing to satisfy the latter, and then would return to refresh themselves, or rather debase themselves, with their feminine companions. This fine life, in short, was so pleasing to some that they desired neither to marry nor to suffer their associates to be married." (*Amours des Rois de France*, edition in 12mo of 1739, page 115). Brantôme, it is to be noticed, does not say that the Lesbians of the court of France *did rear* weasels; we do not know for what purpose; he remarks merely that these little animals were with the ancients the symbol "of feminine loves," which, he adds, "were carried on in two fashions, some by means of *fricarelles*, others, as the poet says, by *geminos committere cunnos*. This fashion brings with it no damage, some say, when one makes use of instruments fashioned in the form of. . . : which are commonly called *godemichys*," a word formed from two Latin words: *Gaude mihi*.

Brantôme, after having displayed his classical erudition on a subject which was not less common then than in Greek and Roman antiquity, seriously inquires whether two ladies, "amorous one of the other, as is frequently seen today, sleeping together and doing what is called *donna con donna*, in imitation of the learned Sappho of Lesbos, are able to commit adultery and between them to make their husbands cuckolds." He goes on to cite a number of examples in support of his opinion, which would not appear to be in accord with that of Martial: "A fine case we have," he says, "where, without a man, there is still adultery!" We unfortunately do not possess the resources of the Latin to reproduce the guilty orgies of the French Lesbians, whom Brantôme regards with an indulgent eye, especially in certain cases: "One sometimes excuses," he says, "virgins and widowed women for loving these vain and frivolous pleasures, loving better to give themselves to each other and to exchange their mutual warmth than to go with men and become pregnant and dishonored, or to lose their fruit, as many

have done and do; and it is their opinion that they do not thereby so greatly offend God and are not so much whores as they would be with men." Brantôme, in this ticklish chapter, which he might have "prolonged a thousand times," does not name any of the ladies who indulged in these infamous *fricarelles*, but he gives to understand that the maids of honor of the Queen Mother and the Princesses of the blood were in the habit of corrupting each other. He relates, after the confidences of M. de Clermont-Tallard, that this lord "being a small lad" and sharing then the studies of the young Duke of Anjou, who was later to become Henri III, perceived one day, through the cracks in a partition, two "very great ladies" who "were passing thus the time." He adds to the licentious circumstances of his recital: "I have known many others who have indulged in the same amours, among whom, I have heard tell of one from the mouths of all who was very superlative in this, and who had a number of ladies, honoring them and serving them more than the men did, and making love to them like a man to his mistress; and if she took to any of them, she would entertain them *à pot et à feu* and would give them whatever they wanted. Her husband was quite at ease, and very content, as well as other husbands whom I have seen, who were quite at ease at seeing their wives engaged in such amours rather than in those with men, thinking their wives thereby not so light nor so whorish. But I believe they were deceived; for this little exercise, from what I have heard tell, is but an apprenticeship to the great trade with men." One may be astonished that, in the midst of these hideous disorders, which knew no moral or religious barriers, the husbands were still concerned with their conjugal honor. It is, however, averred that these husbands, even those who in their youth had led the most dissolute life and brought the most grief to women's virtue, were in general very unaccommodating on their own account, and prided themselves upon defending and keeping for themselves that which they so many times had taken from others. Hence, the furious jealousies and the terrible reprisals, which only served to bring to light the audacity and the astuteness of the women. Brantôme, in the first discourse of his *Dames Galantes*, entitled *De l'Amour de Plusieurs Dames Mariées et qu'Elles n'en Sont si Blasmables, Comme on Diroit, Pour le Faire*, has endeavored to write the annals of the great "cuckolds" of the sixteenth century, and one is compelled to recognize the fact that, despite the universal depravity, the point of honor in marriage appeared to be more sacred,

if not better guarded, than in less dissolute periods. The husbands were all the more jealous for the reason that they had greater cause for being so, and since no one showed them any sympathy in their misadventures, they were all the more vindictive and cruel toward their unfaithful wives; we may explain thus why it was the introduction of chastity girdles in France took place publicly under the reign of Henri III, undoubtedly on the advice of certain Italians of the court, who were familiar with the means employed in their own country for putting under lock and key, like a treasure, the virtue of women.

Nothing is better established than the fact that this Italian mode, which had existed especially at Venice for a number of centuries, and which had come there from the Orient, was actually introduced at this time. It is probable that the Crusades also had brought to France an odious custom which could not be reconciled with the respect which our ancestors bore to ladies. This custom dated back, nevertheless, to the most remote antiquity, and was perpetuated among those peoples whose religion justified the slavery of women. But "a nation as shrewd as ours," as M. le Comte de Laborde spiritedly remarks (*Notice des Emaux, Bijoux et Objets Divers du Musée du Louvre*, Volume II, page 197), must have been inclined to reject with contempt this shameful instrument of servitude. It would seem always that the chastity girdle had been tolerated as an exception along with the most refined and chivalric manners, and that, if a husband did not impose it on his wife, the mother on her daughter, a brother on his sister, the lover or the friend (*amie*) would adopt it herself, as a symbol of fidelity, presenting the key to her *ami* or to the lover. This was one of those *emprises* which the ladies and their servants set themselves reciprocally to prove the constancy and *sûreté* of their love. The *girdle de sûreté*, in place of being an outrage and a shame, became thus a delicate act of tender devotion. Such is, in our opinion, the most natural explanation which might be given for a number of passages in the poems and letters of Guillaume de Machaut, relative to the "treasure" (*trésor*) to which his mistress, Agnes of Navarre, had given him the key.

M. le Comte de Laborde, who quotes these curious passages, would not have it that this *trésor* designated a chastity girdle. Following, however, are the terms which the poet of the fifteenth century makes use of to inform us that he held the key to the "treasure" of Madame Agnes:

Adonc, la belle m'accolla. . . .
Si attingny une clavette
D'or, et de main de maistre faite,
Et dist: "Ceste clef porterez,
Amy, et bien la garderez,
Car c'est la clef de mon tresor.
Je vous en fais seigneur des or;
Et, dessus tout, en serez mestre,
Et si l'aim' plus que mon ceil destre,
Car c'est mon heur, c'est ma richesse,
*C'est ce dont je puis faire largessel"**

Agnes of Navarre, writing to Guillaume de Machaut, addressed to him certain suggestions which have no sense, if this *trésor* was not what we think it was: "Be careful, darling, not to lose the key of my box (*coffre*), for if it were lost, I should not hope, darling, ever to have perfect joy; for, *par Dieu*; it shall never be opened by any other key than that which you hold, and that shall be when it pleases you, for in this world I have of nothing else so great desire." This quotation and others, equally explicit, still do not prevent M. de Laborde from denying the authenticity of these chastity girdles, which are to be found in certain collectors' cabinets: "In the case of singularities of this sort," he remarks, with a distraction which is too evident to permit us to think of reproaching him for a lack of erudition, "one is very brave, when one has the pen of a Brantôme."

"In the time of King Henri," relates Brantôme in his *Dames Galantes*, "there was a certain sharper (*quinquailleux*) who brought a dozen of these devices to the fair of Saint-Germain, *pour brider le cas des femmes*, devices which were made of iron and in the form of a girdle, and which were closed below and locked with a key, so subtly made that it was not possible for a woman, being once bridled with them, being ever able to overcome them for a gentle pleasure, having

**Translator's Note:—And then, my lady gave to me*
A very cunning-fashioned key,
A key of gold, of master-make,
And said, "This key, my lover, take
And guard it well for love's sweet sake,
For it is the key to my treasury,
And you are the lord of all currency;
You are, indeed, the lord and master,
And I would lose my right eye faster
Than part with it, for it is my wealth,
Given by largess, never won by stealth.

as she did but a few small holes *pour servir à pisser*." The description of these girdles is too precise not to have been made *de visu* and Brantôme, in reporting the fact, does not appear to marvel at it, as though the thing were in any wise new to him: He adds that "Many gallants, honest gentlemen of the court, threatened this cursed sharper with death, if he persisted in manufacturing and selling these *engins* which were so distasteful to them, and they obliged him to hurl into the latrines all that remained of his stock." As to the anecdote of the woman who prostituted herself to a lockmaker in order to obtain a duplicate key to the girdle which the husband believed he alone could open, it is probably one of those merry tales which the appearance of the girdles put into circulation at court. However this may be, if the *quinquaille*ur of the fair of Saint-Germain was forced to sacrifice a few of these devices, the model was not lost, and they continued to be manufactured secretly for the use of certain jealous husbands, who did not blush to conduct themselves toward their wives like slave merchants in Turkey. Ridicule, for the rest, took revenge on this indecent invention, and there were but a small number of husbands or lovers who dared call to their aid these girdles which the French law looked upon as a grave offense on the part of the husband against the wife. And yet, examples of these strange shackles were to be found still down to the middle of the eighteenth century; for we find the advocate Freydier pleading in Parliament in behalf of a married woman who accuses her husband of having subjected her to such unworthy treatment. (See his *Playdoier Contre l'Introduction des Cadanas ou Ceintures de Chasteté*, Montpellier, 1750, in-8, with a figure representing the cadenas.)

Italian customs must certainly have become deeply rooted in France for such objects as these to be shown in public, and especially for them to be purchased and made use of. We shall see, in another chapter, how the influence of Italy had perverted the manners of men at the court of the Valois, but we shall also make the point, for the honor of our own country, that these turpitudes rarely went beyond the confines of the court, but were generally repressed, condemned and execrated by French gallantry. The court alone, at this period, was the scene and sewer of all the most hideous vices; Catherine de Medici had looked upon this unbridled corruption as serving the interests of her political policy, since it weakened the strongest characters and degraded the noblest hearts; but she thereby gave to the enemies of

her government, *a ceux de la Religion*, as they were called, a terrible weapon; for the Reformation, in rearing the standard of revolt against royalty and popery, might say to the people with reason that the object of this holy warfare was the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The people learned in this manner to despise and to hate the great; they gave credence to all rumors, true or false, which spread like echoes from the court; they were no longer indifferent to the private lives of princes and courtiers; they believed they had the right to summon these mighty ones before their own tribunal, and they decreed the downfall of Henri III when the League insisted upon his taking arms under pretext of defending the manners and religion of his ancestors. One might, therefore, say that if Catherine de Medici had recourse to Prostitution for purposes of government, it was Prostitution which, by dishonoring the King and the court of France, led to the great popular uprising of the League.

We would not, however, credit all the abominations which the writers among the reformers have imputed to their implacable enemy, Catherine de Medici. It appears to us impossible that this Queen should herself, with political intentions, have corrupted the manners of her own sons, and those of her three daughters. Catherine, however ambitious she may have been, was a tender and devoted mother. We see from her correspondence that she had nothing more at heart than the strengthening of the royal power through the house of Valois; if she herself always reigned under the name of her sons, it was that she felt herself more capable than they of directing affairs and of sustaining the throne upon which they sat, one after another. She was profoundly chagrined that none of her four sons seemed to promise her a numerous posterity nor to give evidence of a desire to found a royal house and continue Henri II's line. One would not, then, admit as a likely fact, that she would have set herself, so to speak, to cast with her own hand a blemish upon the sources of heredity in her own family. It has been asserted, in certain atrocious brochures, that she did not wait for the age of puberty in her children to give them over to the most disgusting form of Prostitution; according to these anonymous pamphleteers, she had, by such frightful and disorderly proceedings, profoundly affected the health of the unhappy Kings, Francis II, Charles IX, and Henri III, who as a result of a premature abuse of their physical strength, were no longer capable of having heirs. To Charles IX fell the task of giving the lie to this calumny,

since he had a legitimate daughter who died at an early age, and two natural children. It is permissible to suppose, nevertheless, that these Kings would not have permitted the line of the Valois to be extinguished, if debauchery had spared their youth. As to the report that Catherine had incestuous relations with her son, Henri, whom she loved, as a matter of fact, more than the others, that is one of those infamies which history should be ashamed to pick up from the mire of civil wars, in the course of which each party is forced to defile the other in the persons of its leaders. Catherine was, undoubtedly, too indulgent so far as the morality of her children is concerned, and that is all there was to it.

Francis II, who died so young, and who was of so frail a constitution, "was not subject to love like his predecessors," reports Brantôme, "and in this, he suffered great hardship, for he had for wife the most beautiful woman in the world and the most amiable (Mary Stuart) . . . I have seen him," adds Brantôme, "fail a number of times." Charles IX, who succeeded him, did not care greatly for ladies in his early youth; he preferred to them the chase and gymnastic exercises; he replied, however, to a great lady who reproached him with his coldness: "And so you have this opinion of me because I love the chase more than that sport of yours? *Hé! par Dieu!* If I cared to give myself to it just once, I would so close upon you, all you of my court, that I should bring you to earth one after another." Brantôme who quotes this response of the King, adds merely: "Which, however, he did by no means do, but undertook it a few times, more for the sake of his reputation than out of lasciviousness, and very soberly the while, setting himself to choose a maiden of a good house, whom I shall not name, for his mistress was a very beautiful, wise and respectable *demoyselle*, to whom he showed all the honor and respect that was possible." This mistress was Marie Touchet, daughter of a perfumer or a notary of Orleans, and he loved her as long as he lived, but always secretly, for the Queen Mother, very complacent toward passing amours, looked with much displeasure upon the prospect of the King becoming seriously enamoured of a girl who would give him bastards. Catherine de Medici had declared herself so opposed to this concubine relation that Charles IX, on his death bed, did not have the courage to commend Marie Touchet. It was, however, love which caused his death, if we are to believe the scandalous talk of the court, embodied in this epitaph:

*Pour aimer trop Diane et Cythérée aussy,
L'une et l'autre m'ont mis en ce tombeau icy.**

Brantôme expresses doubts as to the truth of the rumors which were then current: "Some have desired to make it out that during his malady he fled to the side of *the Queen, his sister*, and there shortened his days; which has given rise to the saying that Venus along with Diana caused his death." We have printed in italics the words which the first editor of Brantôme permitted to creep into the original text to replace three initial letters which were found there. "Brantôme," says Sauval, who had access to a good manuscript of this gossipy historian, "tells us some had said that, during his malady, he had eloped with Queen Marguerite, although he avows that at the court nothing was ever said of their amours; but according to the rumor finally prevalent, it was with L.R.M., in which there would be much appearance of truth, and it is undoubtedly in this manner that the passage of Brantôme must be restored, for in short, from the fashion in which their amour was talked of, they loved more than fraternally, and they even did not endeavor to conceal it any too much." The incest of Marguerite of Valois with her brother, Charles IX, is but too well established, although Brantôme does not make allusion to it, except in this single passage, in which the name of Marguerite is hidden under initials which might be interpreted in various fashions. But it must not be forgotten that Brantôme was Queen Marguerite's favorite and at the same time her secretary; it is easy to understand the discretion he would have to observe toward this Princess. The author of the *Divorce Satyrique*, written under the inspiration of a husband and a wrathful King who wanted a divorce, did not have to observe the same discretion; nevertheless, he avoids reflecting upon the mother of kings of France the shame which he pitilessly attributes to their sister; he envelops in obscurity those incests which he regretfully admits: "She afterwards added," he says, "to her filthy conquests her young brothers, of whom one, namely François (Duke of Alençon) continued this incest all his life; and Henri (Henri III) was so greatly put out by this that afterward he was not able to esteem her, having for a long time noticed that the years, in place of arresting her desires, had merely augmented their fury." The amours of Charles IX and his sister, whom he named *Margot*, would have caused more

**Translator's Note:—"I have loved Diane and Cythérée, too, and between them, they have put me in this tomb."*

scandal in a court that was less demoralized; but as it was, almost no attention was taken of it, and this shameful topic merely provided a theme for a few *pasquils* and a few *chansons*. It is to be presumed, moreover, that this incest was, for both the brother and the sister, but a passing distraction, and that they both returned to their favorite occupations, Charles to the chase and Marguerite to gallantry. Charles IX knew Margot entirely too well not to have judged her as she is judged in the *Divorce Satyrique*: "Everything is indifferent to her where her pleasures are concerned, and she thinks neither of age, rank nor of extraction, providing she may intoxicate herself and satisfy her appetites." The writer thus explains what he would have liked to say, in those words which were repeated apropos of the marriage of the King of Navarre to Marguerite of Valois: "I do not merely give my sister Margot to my cousin of Navarre, I give her equally to all the Huguenots of France." This marriage concealed a detestable ambushade and treason: the Protestant chiefs who had come to Paris to be present at the nuptials and to sign the peace, were involved, most of them, in the massacre of Saint Bartholomew. The day after that bloody night, Charles IX remarked with a smile to his gentlemen: "Teh! but my big Margot has a gentle c. . . ! By the blood of God! I do not think there is another like it in the world; it has taken all my Huguenot rebels like a bird call (*a la pippée*)!" (*Journal de Henri III* by Pierre de l'Estoile, edited and published after the original manuscripts by A. Champillion.)

It is a singular fact that the Queen Mother, who had encouraged this frightful license for political reasons rather than from a love of debauchery, did not herself mingle in the bacchanalia of the court. Agrippa d'Aubigné, and other reformed writers tell us, and Sauval repeats their words, that "this Princess loved the greatest prelate of her times and many other lords." But we are forced to regard these vague allegations as false, seeing that we do not find in Brantôme a single word which alludes to such a gallantry on the part of the Queen Mother. Henri Estienne merely remarks, in *le Discours Merveilleux*, that Catherine, from her earliest youth, had shown "evident signs of an ambitious spirit and one subject entirely to her own pleasures." We are disposed to believe that one should read here *volontés* (will) in place of *voluptés* (pleasures). As to the Cardinal of Lorraine, who, according to l'Estoile, was always uttering "*ce vilain mot de f. . .*," and who, according to Brantôme, was "the greatest

braggart (*abatteur de bois*) in the realm," he was the accomplice in the political acts of the Queen mother; but if he had the good fortune to render her faithless to the memory of her husband, he guarded well this state secret. Brantôme relates that this superb Cardinal, going to the court of Piedmont, forcibly embraced two or three times the Duchess of Savoy (Beatrice of Portugal), who had refused to accord him the honor of the kiss of courtesy. "What!" he said to her, "am I a person to be treated in this manner and fashion? I kiss the Queen my mistress, who is the greatest Queen in the world; and you, I should not kiss you, who are but a dirty little Duchess? And what would you say if you knew that I have slept with ladies as beautiful and of as great or greater house than you?" Brantôme discreetly adds: "It is possible that he spoke the truth;" and it is permissible to suppose that the Cardinal, who had come near betraying his secret, was boasting of the kindness which the Queen Mother had shown him to the exclusion of all others.

However this may be, Catherine de Medici, despite her example or lack of example, was not any too severe in the matter of manners, nor even in modesty; as we may judge from the banquet which she gave to the King in 1577, in the garden of the château de Chenonceaux; "The most beautiful ladies and the most respectable of the court," says the *Journal* of l'Estoile, "being half nude and having their hair scattered like brides, were employed for the table service." The chronicler was not there, unfortunately, and he is unable to inform us as to what followed the banquet. Fêtes of this sort ended, ordinarily, in excesses stimulated by those committed at table. At the marriage of the goldsmith, Claude Marcel, with the daughter of the Seigneur de Vicourt, the ceremony took place at the hôtel de Guise, and all the court was invited to it. After the supper, King Henri III and his lads, the Princesses and the ladies of the court put on masks to *porter le momon* to the newlyweds, an indecent ceremony which was a survival of the cult of Priapus and Venus. "The wisest ladies and damsels retired, and were wise in doing so," says l'Estoile, "for such confusion, disorder and infamy resulted that, if the tapestries had been able to speak, they would have told many fine things." (See the *Journal de Henri III*, under date of December 10, 1578.)

The mask, under the reign of the Valois, was not less propitious to amours than in the time of Charles VI; for, according to Brantôme's expression, "the mask hides everything." But the ladies of the court

of Charles IX and Henri III ordinarily disdained these mysterious precautions: "Wishing to communicate with their servants," says Brantôme, "and not as with rocks and marbles; but, after having chosen well they know how to have themselves gravely and gently served and loved by them. And afterwards, having known their fidelity and loyal perseverance, they prostitute themselves to them in a fervent amour and take their pleasure with them, not in masks nor in silence nor mute, nor amid the shadows of night, but in open day they let themselves be seen, tasted, touched and embraced; enjoying the entertainment of pleasing and lascivious discourse, of foolish sayings and lubricious words."

This license of language was looked upon at that time as an indispensable spice to the sensual pleasures: "Words have a great deal to do with love," says Brantôme, who devotes to this subject a chapter of his *Dames Galantes*, "they have a very great efficacy, and where they are lacking, the pleasure is imperfect." The smutty poems which were read at court, and which scandalized no one, give us an idea of what must have been the indecency and brazenness of the ordinary tête-à-tête; thus Brantôme lays down the principle that "when one is alone with his friend, every gallant lady desires to be free in her words and to say that which is pleasing to her, in order all the more to stir Venus." We should not be astonished to learn that the greatest ladies were, in this particular, a "hundred times more lascivious and disorderly in their words than the common women and others." The proverb which found currency at this period, "whorish as a princess" (*putain comme une princesse*) was undoubtedly provoked by this monstrous debauchery in words, which drew so much admiration from Brantôme, and which added every day so many locutions, so many images, so many ready-made phrases to the erotic tongue: "In other times," he remarks, with a weird philological naïveté, "our French language has not been so beautiful nor so enriched as it is today; for it has been a long while since the Italian, the Spanish and the Greek were so, and never have I met a lady who spoke this language, however little she was practised in the trade of love, but she spoke it very well." Thus, we see that no sort of Prostitution, including that of the good French language, was lacking at this depraved court, which rivalled the bad houses in both manners and language. (See especially the *Premières Oeuvres Poétiques du Capitaine Lasphrise*, Paris, J. Gesselin, 1599, 12 mo.)

CHAPTER LXXII

IT IS a fact remarkable enough that the ordinance of Louis IX, which abolished legal Prostitution, but which could not be put into execution during the reign of that holy King, was promulgated anew and put in force again in the reign of Charles IX. The philosophers and magistrates had thought up to then that there was a real danger in any attempt to suppress absolutely, in principle as in fact, public debauchery, that inevitable leprosy of the body social; but the civil authorities were in agreement with the ecclesiastical authorities in the attempt to prevent the evil from spreading beyond those limits which legislation had marked out for it. Suddenly, in the middle of the sixteenth century, amidst all the depravity and excesses, and the most brazenly corrupt court life, legal Prostitution was prohibited and abolished by an edict of the King, which the successors of Charles IX did not dare to repeal nor even modify by giving it a less rigorous interpretation. This edict, it is true, had been issued in the name of the young King who was then a ward of the States of Orleans, which concerned themselves with the reformation of manners with a zeal worthy of a more virtuous era. Article 101 of the great ordinance of 1560, which was not read and registered in Parliament until the 13th of September, 1561, was couched thus: "It is forbidden to all persons to lodge and receive in their houses for more than one night persons unknown and without employment. They are enjoined to denounce these to justice, under pain of prison and an arbitrary fine. All *bordeaux*, *berlans*, games of nine-pins and of dice are likewise to be punished extraordinarily, without dissimulation or connivance on the part of the judges, under pain of being deprived of their offices."

It may be supposed, with much likelihood, that this article passed unperceived among the 148 articles which composed the ordinance; for the word *bordeaux* had not found a place, without good intention, beside the word *berlans*, as though to confuse and assimilate the two. This alone did not, perhaps, in the thought of the legislator, imply the absolute suppression of the bad houses and the complete abolition of Prostitution. Charles IX was but ten years old at the time he signed the edict, which he was not capable of understanding, and which he probably would not have approved later. "Never," says Étienne

Pasquier, in one of his letters (Volume II, page 520), "never had a King who preceded him made such fine edicts as he: witness that of the year 1560, a decree of the States, then assembled in the city of Orleans, another which he issued at Roussillon in the year 1563, and the last at Moulins in the year 1566, along with any number of articles on police matters and excellent regulations, which for a long time were looked upon as among our first ordinances. To whom are we indebted for this good? To none other than Messire Michel de l'Hospital, his great and wise chancellor, who, under the authority of the young King, his master, was chiefly responsible for the first decree and the instigator, promoter and author of the other two. "And if only," adds the sage and learned Pasquier, "they had been in all points observed with the same devotion as that with which they were framed!" We must then attribute to the great chancellor, Michel de l'Hospital, all the honor of these decrees, which, as Pasquier observes, soon fell into desuetude, but which left behind them in our codes the imperishable evidence of a high morality.

The ordinance prohibiting Prostitution, we may be assured, created general surprise, and was looked upon at first as incapable of being enforced, at least in Paris. It had been preceded, however, by various royal ordinances which appeared to have prepared the path for it, and which, despite obstacles and resistance, were executed faithfully enough. Thus, clandestine Prostitution found itself hunted down and prosecuted in such a manner that a dissolute woman might at any moment be expelled from the house in which she lodged, while the neighbors had a right to compel the proprietor to break her lease. What is more, the upright tenant who dwelt in the house of a woman of evil life had but to denounce the latter as such in order to oblige her to evacuate, following a simple judiciary complaint. The Parliament of Paris had confirmed a sentence of this sort by a decree of the 11th of September, 1542. A decree of the 10th of February, 1544, was still more explicit. "It was decided," says Capon, in his *Recueil d'Arrêts Notables des Cours Souveraines de France*, "that a woman of evil life should not be permitted to take a lease on a house which had been judicially seized, even though she offered more than another, and that, when she should have obtained such a house and established herself therein, her evil life should be sufficient to cause her to be dislodged and to compel her to break the lease." This was not all; Henri II had endeavored on a number of occasions to expel from the court and the

army a multitude of lost women following (*en suivant*) the army and the court; but Henri II did not include in this partial expulsion those privileged prostitutes who fulfilled their functions under the guidance of a *dame gouvernante*. As to the *ribaudes* of the army, no king, no general would have permitted himself to expel them all; but the military police did its best to diminish their number, which was always on the increase, and which greatly interfered with discipline. We do not know as to the daughters of joy regularly attached to each body of troops; we only know that the marshals authorized the presence of one *goujat* for three soldiers: now in the armies *goujats* and *ribaudes* were on the same footing and shared the same fate.

The Provost of Paris availed himself of the article relating to Prostitution, as soon as the edict of the year 1560 came to have the force of law, and he set about executing this law in the City. There was at this period, in the bourgeois classes, a sort of show of moral austerity, as a protest against the disorders of the court, and at the same time, as an attempt to rival the severe manners of the reformers, Protestantism had, so to speak, hurled a challenge to the Catholics by setting up as a model of continence and virtue those heretics who were hanged and burned as criminals. There was at that time in Paris, as in all the principal cities, an open warfare on Prostitution, a crusade undertaken by the municipal power in order to do away with the dens of debauchery and their shameful inhabitants. The women of evil life who, up to then, had peaceably carried on their scandalous industry under the protection of the laws and of the magistrates, were driven beyond the walls of cities, arrested and imprisoned, condemned in case of a second offense to the lash, to prison, and to the brand, exposed to the pillory, hunted down in the fields like wild beasts and forced to go into hiding in order to escape this general persecution. It would appear, nevertheless, that the "bad places" of Paris, which had been devoted to legal Prostitution since the reign of St. Louis, and which were, according to the terms of the ancient ordinances, "to this ordained and set aside," it would appear that these places were not at first affected by the edict of 1560; for this edict did not appear to have the effect of weakening the old legislation, which for more than three centuries had regulated the condition of prostitutes. These latter, moreover, those at least whom the expense and dangers of a legal proceeding did not frighten, made a show of opposition before the provost and maintained that the new edict did not

carry with it the authority to drive them from the "*places et lieux publics*" assigned to their trade: "That is to say," says the last ordinance of the provost, which had renewed that of Louis IX, in 1367, "at the Abreuvoir de Mascon in la Boucherie, rue Froidmantel, near the clos Brunelin Glatigny, in the Cour Robert de Paris, in Bailliehöe, in Tyron, in the rue Chapon and in Champ-Flory." We do not know the circumstances surrounding this proceedings, which lasted for a number of years. But we are inclined to believe that Prostitution continued to remain mistress of some of these more ancient asylums. "The streets of Glatigny, or the Val d'Amour, of Arras or Champ-Gaillard, of Fromentel or Fromenteau, etc., continued to offer retreats for debauchery." (*Hist. de Paris*, by Dulaure, edition of 1825, Volume IV, page 561.) We have not discovered the decrees rendered on this point; but we may almost affirm that, if the number of public places named in the ordinance of 1367 was reduced by decision of Parliament, a number of others remained in possession of their obscene privilege, when it was proved by authentic documents that they had been, in a manner, established by Saint Louis. Thus, the lupanar of the rue Chapon, which had for so long braved the bishops of Châlons by remaining open in the very shadow of the doorway of their town-house, was only closed under failure to justify its "*ancienneté*." (*Antiquit. de Paris* by Sauval, Volume II, page 78.)

Another bad house, more celebrated on account of its governess, who was known as "Mother* Cardine," held out longer than all the other bordaux of Paris against the royal ordinance which suppressed these places. La mère Cardine, whom we know from a number of satiric pieces published about this time, must have been the "queen of the procuresses" (*reine des maquerelles*) of Paris; she was, one can be certain, very rich, since she was able to defray the expense of a long litigation, and, when judgment was rendered against her by the tribunal of the Châtelet, she still possessed sufficient influence to prevent execution of judgment. The establishment of La mère Cardine was considerable; it occupied a number of large houses in the rues du Grand and du Petit Heuleu in the center of the quartier Bourg-l'Abbé. These infamous streets, the names of which, *Heuleu* or *Hue-leu*, indicate perhaps that it was the custom to "hoot" the debauchees who were seen entering there, had no other inhabitants than the girls and their vile lovers; all these houses which had a "gable on the street"

*Translator's Note:—A common title even today for the governess of a *mauvais lieu*.

did their best to preserve their leases, and their owners, with this end in view, addressed supplications to the civil lieutenant of the Châtelet, to the provost of Paris, and finally to the King. But all was futile; after a long legal process, the King, by letters-patent of the 12th of February, 1565 (1566, according to the new style), commanded the civil lieutenants to expedite judgment and to put the ordinance into execution without any more delay. As a consequence, judgment was cried to the sound of the trumpet by sworn criers at the entrance of the streets known as Heuleu. The women who were inhabitants of these streets left them within twenty-four hours, and all those brothels which had entered into a contest with the Châtelet and with Parliament were irrevocably closed. Sauval says, in speaking of this result, that in that year, "the asylums of public women were ruined from top to bottom." The letters-patent of the King, registered at the Châtelet under date of the 24th of March, 1565 (or rather 1566), provoked a new ordinance on the part of the provost of Paris, who proceeded definitely to suppress legal Prostitution under terms of the edict of 1560. (See the *Edicts et Ordonnances des Roys de France*, collected by Fontanon, Volume I, page 574.) It was always the Chancellor Michel de l'Hospital who labored thus to purify manners. It was he who refused to permit the dissolute women to oppose the King and the magistrates. To the letters-patent of the 12th of February, which concerned only the brothels of Heuleu, the provost of Paris had added this paraphrase, conforming the prohibitive article of the edict: "In addition, in accordance with law, upon the verbal request of the said persons of the King, all inhabitants of this city and suburbs of Paris and others are hereby forbidden to suffer in their houses a secret or public brothel under pain of a fine of 60 Parisian pounds for the first time and a fine of 120 Parisian pounds for the second, and for the third time, confiscation of the property. And the said letters, together with the ordinances, shall be read to the sound of the trumpet and by public cry in the streets of this city as well as the suburbs of Paris, as well as other places where the said brothels are, in order that no one may pretend cause of ignorance." Thus, the closing of the houses of debauchery in the rues du Grand and du Petit Hueleu occasioned also the closing of most of the bad houses which previously had existed at Paris; those which were not affected by the general proscription, and which the provost of Paris permitted to go on existing behind closed doors, safeguarded by his tacit permission—these latter lost all the

rights which they had held under the ordinance of St. Louis, and since they no longer had any more than a mere provisory existence, we may believe that it was from this time on that they were described by a nickname which has remained in use, and which served to define the nature of their privileges: "*Houses of tolerance*." Moreover, from this period on, as Sauval expressly states (Volume II, page 650), the public women "ceased to have statutes, judges, particular habits and special streets reserved for their dissoluteness." One might, then, say that legal Prostitution had been legally abolished in France.

We have indicated the causes which impress us as having provoked this great police measure; we have stated that Protestantism had forced the government thus to head a reform of manners; we have made it clear how the virtuous Chancellor de l'Hospital was especially interested in this reform, which satisfied the desires of honest folk, without distinction of religion or of politics. The various historians have assumed that the suppression of the bad houses had been occasioned by the imperious necessity of public health; for the venereal malady, which had spread in a frightful manner as a result of public debauchery, had made of each lupanar a redoubtable center of infection. We know that this horrible malady, the symptoms of which were not always so frightful as formerly, had multiplied its ravages until Prostitution had become a permanent enemy of public health. On the fourth of December, 1555, the King's advocate, M. Denis Riant, having made a complaint to the court of the Parliament of Paris against the bad houses of the Champ Gaillard and the Champ d'Albiac, where were daily committed "infinite thefts, many violences, larcenies and other misdemeanors by the tenants of the houses, who keep, at least the greater part of them, brothels in their chambers, there receiving unknown folk, without employment, ruffians, vagabonds, poor girls and women," the King's advocate stated in an addendum to his complaint, that "in the first year alone there have been found eighteen or twenty young men, scholars of honest families, suffering from the *vérole*, from haunting these places, a thing which is very pitiable, and requiring to be looked to." The Court had already issued two decrees, enjoining the proprietors in the Champ Gaillard and the Champ d'Albiac from renting their houses "except to known folk and those reputed to be of good life and manners." It directed the criminal lieutenants to execute the preceding decrees and to put

an end to the disorder. (See the *Hist. de Paris*, by Lobineau and Falibien, Volume II, page 767.)

It is practically established that the plague of Naples had invaded all the dens of debauchery at the moment when the edict of Charles IX totally suppressed Prostitution. The poet, Baïf, in his *Passetemps*, draws the picture of "Missir Macé," who had had "great misfortunes"

*A suivre les amours communes.**

Following is the allocution which a friend addresses to this incorrigible, who was unable to refrain from "showing the girls a good time" (*désister de faire feste aux filles*):

*Comment n'êtes-vous pas content,
Missir Macé, d'avoir eu tant
Et tant de mauvaises fortunes
A suivre les amours communes?
D'avoir si roide la vérole,
Que vous n'avez dent qui n'en grole?
D'avoir la vérole si bien,
Que du nez ne vous rests rien?
D'avoir tout le palais mangé
Et d'avoir de chancres rongé
Votre membre plus qu'à demy?****

Another epigram of Baïf, in which one Galin is the hero of an equally sorry adventure, depicts the latter under colors not less hideous:

*Translator's Note:—"As a result of commonplace amours."

**Translator's Note:—

"Why are you not satisfied,
Missir Mace, to have tried
Your luck so many hapless times
In your common amorous crimes?
To have had the syphilis so stout,
You've not a tooth's not falling out;
To have had the syphilis so well,
You've not a nose that I can tell.
To have had your palate eaten away,
While gnawing chancres devour, they say,
Your member half in two.

*Pour hanter souvent les bourdeaux
 Le chancre t'accueillit si bien,
 Que du nez en ta face rien
 Ne t'est resté, que les naseaux!**

A writer of the same time, Antoine Duverdier, who thinks that "God has sent this plague upon earth as a scourge to revenge the filthy, illicit and common lecheresses of the bad houses," recognizes, in his *Diverses Leçons*, that "this malady was a good deal more contagious formerly than it is now, on account of certain sovereign remedies which have been found," but still he is astonished that the debauchees dared to risk contracting, for the second time, a malady which, while not ordinarily fatal, commonly leaves sorry souvenirs with its victims: "There are a number," he exclaims with surprise, "who have had the syphilis six or seven times!" Louis Guyon, who wrote his own *Diverses Leçons* as a sequel to those of Duverdier, points out, as a physician, that the venereal malady still baffled all the efforts of science. "This venereal contagion," he observes (Volume I, page 612), "for the reason that it is generally communicated through lechery and an indecent act, is, as a consequence, a shameful one." Louis Guyon, who means to say by this that the virus of the lecherous woman is more dangerous in the brothels than anywhere else, cites the case of two youths of high family, whom he had treated at Paris in 1563, and whom he had not succeeded in curing. These two imprudent youngsters, it is true, had endeavored to hide their condition, until it became known "by the scurf, by red pustules which appeared on their foreheads, by the pains in the middle of their backs, as well as in their arms, legs, buttocks, shoulders, and in the front of the head, every night until the dawn of day, and by other signs, like pain in the gullet, and not being able to swallow their food." All the physicians and surgeons, into whose hands the poor patients fell, so failed in their cures that an ambassador of the King of Spain, hearing the poor victims groan all night long, counselled the latter to sail for America and there seek a cure in accordance with a custom practised by the natives of the country. This treatment met with great success, and

**Translator's Note:—*

For having haunted the bourdeaux,
 Your features with the chancres go,
 And nothing's left of nose or face
 But two small nostrils in their place.

the unfortunate ones who had departed in a hectic condition and looking like corpses, came back to France in a flourishing state of health. Such a result undoubtedly served to confirm the opinion of certain scholars, who would have it that the plague of Naples had been discovered at the same time that America was discovered by Christopher Columbus; on the other hand, this opinion was not yet so well established but that certain doctors of the Faculty of Medicine of Paris were to be found tenaciously upholding the thesis that this malady was not new, having, they insisted, merely changed character. "They are greatly in the wrong," remarks Antoine Duverdier, "who hold that this malady which the Greeks called *leichen*, Pliny *mentagra* and we the *feu volage* or *male dartre* is the same disease as that vulgarly known as the *vérole*."

It is possible, then, that the statesmen who were endeavoring to abolish Prostitution by royal edict were merely endeavoring to apply an heroic remedy in an effort to drive the shameful malady out of France, along with the wretched women, almost all of whom were infected with it. But it might easily be foreseen that, in thus forcing the population of the bad houses to reënter the bosom of society and there disguise themselves under decent exteriors, one was merely causing the venereal contagion to flow into the current of domestic life. Documents are absolutely lacking to enable us to appreciate the physiological and hygienic effects of the closing of the houses of debauchery. The effect was not, as might be supposed, to put an end to public debauchery; vice, it is true, no longer possessed privileged and authorized asylums, but it became all the bolder in exposing itself to the light of day. Thus, clandestine Prostitution had public market in all the streets and all the public places; the "common" woman, in losing the right legally to practice her trade under certain fixed conditions, acquired the right to be seen everywhere, and to regulate for herself the conditions of the criminal industry which she carried on in secret. There were soon, undoubtedly, as many secret lupanars at Paris as there had been public ones before; the number of agents of Prostitution did not diminish; quite on the contrary, the procurers of both sexes had become more necessary as well as more numerous; custom had soon adopted, in the city and in the suburbs, certain spots as meeting-places, where debauchery went to recruit its militias and to set up its batteries. As to the brothels, which were no longer under the surveillance of the municipal power, they fell into the hands of

those degraded beings who had no fear of exposing themselves to the chastisements of the law, and who made these indecent taverns the dens of all crime.

We cannot doubt that the edict of 1560 against the brothels had scandalous consequences, when we behold vagabond prostitutes assembling by night about the stone crosses which were reared in almost all the public places of Paris. In 1572, the Bishop of Paris reared the Croix de Gastine, erected upon a small square in the rue de Saint-Denis; and this cross, according to the expression of one chronicler, "served as a sign to debauchees," who assembled there every evening, and who there committed a thousand profanations. The *Journal de Henri III* relates in these terms the removal of another cross, which libertinism had no less profaned: "On the night of Thursday, the 10th of March, 1580, by ordinance of the Bishop of Paris, and with the secret consent of the court, was removed from the place where it had stood the crucifix nicknamed *maquereau*, and by the police borne to the Bishop, and this on account of the scandalous nickname which the people had given it, by reason of the fact that this crucifix of painted and gilded wood, of the size ordinarily to be seen in parishes, was placed against the wall of a house, situated at the bottom of the old rue du Temple, near the sewers, in which house and its environs was kept a brothel; in such manner that this venerable instrument of our redemption served as a sign to the whorish retreats." Pierre de l'Estoile does not inform us whether or not this brothel was closed by order of the provost, after the Bishop, Pierre de Gondi, had put an end to a scandal which was more deplorable than one arising from the mere immunity of a "shop" (*boutique*) of debauchery.

The majority of houses at that time had signs which rendered them easily recognizable in the absence of numbers and other indications. The houses of Prostitution had also to have their *marque* or *enseigne*, which was not always suggestive of the destination of the place, for the sign might be a more ancient one; but frequently the sign would proclaim, by means of an indecent emblem or equivocal device, the sort of commerce to which the place was devoted. Thus, Paganiol de la Force affirms that the quartier Gros-Caillou owed its name to a "great flint" (*gros-caillou*) which served as a sign to the lupanar. In any case, this name had not been in use before the end of the sixteenth century, and it may be ascribed to the installation of this house of

debauchery and its metaphorically obscene sign. We shall not undertake an etymological digression, with the object of explaining what this "*caillou*" could have been; we may divine its nature without effort in seeking its origin in these verses of an old poet:

*Jouer au jeu que aux cailles on appelle,
Aux filles est chose plaisante et belle.**

The historians of Paris mention a number of signs of the same sort, which had given the name of rue de la Corne to two streets of the suburb Saint-Germain-des-Pres, now known as the rue Beurrière and the rue Neuve-Guillemin, as well as to a street of the suburb Saint-Marceau, which had been closed in the seventeenth century, and which has since become the Cul-de-sac des Corderies. Sauval reports that there was a deer's head "which the people call *corne*," fastened up on the wall at the corner of the rue de la Corne, and that this deer's head had also given its name of rue de la Petite-Corne to the adjacent street; but he adds that this name had come from the fact that a "troop of prostitutes came there first to establish themselves." It was at the end of the sixteenth century that those prostitutes who were not longer permitted to reside within the walls of the city took refuge in the suburb, where the Abbot of Saint-Germain permitted them to set up their abodes in return for a fixed revenue. But later, this place of debauchery led to such disorders and so scandalized the good parishioners of Saint-Sulpice that the curate of this latter parish obtained from the Abbot of Saint-Germain the right to expel these turbulent neighbors. Along with the sign which hung in front of their retreat, the two streets which this sign had christened disappeared; one received the name of the rue de Guillemin, on account of a fief belonging to a family of that name, while the other took the name of rue Beurrière or des Beurriers; but the people, who remembered having seen the *corne* and the bad house which it advertised to the passer-by, persisted for long in designating the two streets by their ancient names, although the new names had been engraved in letters of gold on the marble plaques at the corner of the two streets, by order of the bailiff of Saint-Germain. It required a good deal of practice to become accustomed to these new names in place of the old ones, and

**Translator's Note*:—To play at skittles, as the game they call,
Is a fine and pleasant thing to maidens all.

the idea of the house of debauchery remained always attached to the place; "and," remarks Sauval, "since the name of *Guillemin* is somewhat proverbial, the people who are pleased to turn everything into raillery, not content with having added to the name of *Guillemin*, proprietor of the garden, that of *Crocquesolle*, have also given the latter name to the street, so that the street is more often known as the rue *Guillemin-Crocquesolle* than it is as the rue *Guillemin*." Without entering into a long archaeological dissertation, we shall remark that *Guillemin*, in the language of the lower classes, signified sometimes a hypocrite, sometimes the characteristics of the man, the same as *guillery*; and the people then sung in the streets a famous refrain which was still in vogue under the regency, at which time it was always to be heard in the mouth of the Duke of Orleans (see the *Mém. du Cardinal Dubois*):

*Du temps du roi Guillemot,
De la reine Guillemote,
On prenoit les hommes au mot
Et les femmes à la m. . . .**

Let us leave it to the etymologists to seek and discover the origin of *guillemin* and *guillemot*!** As to *crocquesolle*, it is evidently a descriptive epithet, and it is our opinion that, *la solle* or *soulle* being a sport with a ball which was greatly in vogue, formerly a quite natural comparison had been brought into play between this sport and the game which is played in houses of prostitution, where the "common woman" passes from hand to hand, in the manner of a *solle* or ball which the players toss from one to another; hence, the word *solle* as a synonym for prostitute and, by extension, for the natural characteristics of a debauched woman.

It is evident that the people had at that time very little sympathy or even pity for the women of evil life, seeing that they pursued them with hoots and frequently chased them with stones, when the women

*Translator's Note:—In the days of King Guillemot, I've heard,
And Queen Guillemote,
Men were taken at their word,
And women at their——.

**Translator's Note:—(J. U. N.'s Note:) Cf. the French *guillemot* and the Welsh *Chwylawg*, a marine diving bird of the genus *Uria*. The genesis of a current vulgarity becomes thus sufficiently plain.

were recognized in decent streets. We have seen also that depraved men who dared to enter those infamous streets, in the light of open day were not any better treated by the populace. We may be assured, then, that the edict of 1560, which suppressed legal Prostitution, met with a favorable reception at the hands of public opinion; and the inhabitants of Paris, with the exception of those who thrived on this species of Prostitution through the rent which they got for their houses, all applauded those police measures which led to the closing of the bad houses. The ruin and embarrassment of the agents of debauchery, the discomfiture and embarrassment of the women, the wrath and confusion of the libertines concerned no one, but was a source of amusement to all. There was an outburst of pleasantries and epigrams directed at these exiles and victims of Prostitution. It was, especially the lupanar of the Hueleu and its celebrated keeper, La Mère Cardine, who served as a target for these facetious pieces in prose and verse, which popular gaiety inspired with verve and in abundance. The best known of these facetious pieces was the *Enfer de la Mère Cardine*, the first edition of which we no longer possess, but which was certainly contemporary with all those poetical *canards* produced as a result of the destruction of the Hueleu. Following is the title of this rare and curious satire, directed against the most famous courtesan of that period: *l'Enfer de la Mère Cardine, traitant de la cruelle et terrible bataille qui fut aux enfers entre les diables et les maquereles de Paris, aux nopces du portier Cerberus et de Cardine, qu'elles vouloient faire royne d'enfer, et qui fut celle d'entre elles, qui donna le conseil de la trahison. . . .** (Without date and without indication of place, but undoubtedly printed at Paris about 1570, in-8.) This piece in verse, which was attributed to Flaminio de Birague, nephew of the Chancellor of France, was reprinted in 1583 and in 1597. In the new impressions, there was added a *chanson de certaines bourgeoises de Paris qui, feignant d'aller en voyage, furent surprises au logis d'une maquerele a Saint-Germain-des-Prez*.** There only exist two or three samples of the reprints of the sixteenth century; but in 1793, a beneficent bibliophile, who did not care to see the *Enfer de la Mère Cardine* disappear

*Translator's Note:—"Purgatory of Mother Cardine, treating of the cruel and terrible battle which took place in hell between the devils and the Parisian procuresses, at the marriage of the gate-keeper Cerberus to Cardine, whom they wished to make queen of hell, and who it was among them who counseled treachery"

**Translator's Note:—"Song of certain Paris goodwives who, feigning to go on a journey, were surprised in the dwelling of a procuress at Saint-Germain-des-Prez."

entirely, prepared a new edition of it, 108 copies being struck off, which are now almost as rare as the older editions.

Following is the beginning of this allegoric poem, which is not, as M. le Marquis du Roure, in his *Analectabllion*, supposes, an act of personal vengeance of the poet against Mother Cardine, but a collective satire, addressed to all the queens of Prostitution:

*Puisque l'oysivete est mère de tout vice,
Je veux, en m'esbattant, chanter cy la malice,
La faulx trahyson et les cruels efforts,
Que fit Cardine un jour en la salle des morts,
Alors que Cupidon lui fit oster les flammes
Qui tourmentent là-bas nos pécheresses âmes.**

"The story of the poem is very simple," says the Marquis du Roure. "Cardine espouses Cerberus, and at the marriage feast, appear the principal *filles* of Paris: Marguerite Remy, nicknamed "the big-eyed" (*les gros yeux*); Anne "of the little bonnet" (*au petit bonnet*); La Normande, the "braggart" (*bragarde*); La Lyonnaise, "the doubter" (*douteuse*), etc. Cupid, the sworn enemy of Pluto, appears at the feast to incite the damned to fight against hell and even to strangle Cerberus." The Marquis du Roure sums up the whole work in this apothegm: "Some girls are worse than all the devils together." The editor of 1793 prints also, following the *Enfer de la Mère Cardine*, a piece of the same sort, which gives us the true date of the accompanying poem of Flaminio de Birague: *Déploration et complainte de la mère Cardine de Paris, cy-devant gouvernante de Huleu, sur l'abolition d'iceluy. Trouvée, après le décès d'ecelle Cardine, en un escrain euquel estoient ses plus privez et preceux secretz, tiltres de ses qualitez authentiques, recettes souveraines, compostes, anthidotes, baulmes, fardz, boetes, ferrements et ustencils servant audict estat dudit mestier*** (without

**Translator's Note:*—Since idleness is mother of all vice,
I here, to add to my own pleasure spice,
Would sing the false treasons and the cruel tricks
Which Cardine did one day beyond the Styx,
When Cupid tempted her to steal the fire
Which there torments our sinful souls with ire.

***Translator's Note:*—Lamentation and complaint of Mother Cardine of Paris, heretofore superintendent of Huleu, upon the abolition of the said place. Found after her decease in a compartment containing her most precious and private secrets; and her authentic prerogatives, along with her sovereign receipts, compounds, antidotes, balms, rouges; and the coffers, tools and implements which are employed in the said trade."

name of place, 1570). It will be sufficient to cite two pieces of the same period which were inspired by the execution of the edict of 1560. One is: *La destruction avec la desolation des povres filles de Huleu et de Darnetal* (without place or date, with an engraving in wood on the title-page). M.J.-C. Brunet, in his *Manuel du Libraire*, says that this piece of six-syllable verse had been composed about 1520; but we know that M. Brunet is not an authority, from the fact that he judges a book from the title-page. This *Complainte* is evidently of the same period, if not by the same hand, as the *Complainte de la Mère Cardine*. Another piece which has to do with this stirring business of the "abolition" of the lupanars is entitled: *Ban de Quelques marchands de Graine à Poile et d'Aucunes Filles de Paris* (without name of place, 1570, in-8). We doubt if a single copy of the original edition of this work has survived, but happily a bibliophile was found in 1814 to reprint this smutty pleasantry, the author of which, Rasse Deseux, was the surgeon to Charles IX and the friend of Ronsard.

The abolition of the brothels, while not thorough-going, was looked upon so favorably by all France that Charles IX and his chancellor, Michel de l'Hospital, continued in their policy of reforming manners through legislation; it would have been easier, however, to expel from within the walls of cities the places of debauchery than completely to expel the prostitutes from the court and from the army. From the most remote times, a princely court, as well as an army, had drawn in its wake a more or less numerous band of evil subjects and lost women. The King, acting in concert with his virtuous minister set about to remedy this abuse. By an edict of the 6th of August, 1570, he ordered that "all other vagabonds, without masters or occupation, must within twenty-four hours vacate our said court, under pain of being hanged and strangled, without hope of any grace or remission; that all prostitutes and public women be dislodged from our court within the said time, under pain of the lash and of the brand." There was probably a multitude of *filles* who were lashed and branded, for they did not hasten to obey the royal ordinance expelling them, and Charles IX was forced to revive this ordinance a number of times in the course of his reign. Legislation against the prostitutes "following the army" (*suivant l'armée*) met with no fewer difficulties in the way of enforcement; for we find Henri III, upon ascending the throne, hastening to renew it in the same terms: "We enjoin not only the provosts of the marshals and their lieutenants, but also our ordinary judges, to drive

out the prostitutes, if any be found following the said troops, and to chastise them with the lash, and similarly the *goujats*, in case more than one for every three soldiers be found." It is certain that this ordinance was never put into execution, at least in a regular and general fashion; but it was sometimes enforced in a cruel manner, owing merely to the caprice of the head of the army. For example, if we care to believe the statements of Varillas (*Hist. de Henri III*, Book VI), the Marshal Strozzi, whom the historian pictures for us as "extremely severe," commanded "that 800 prostitutes following his camp should be cast into the river Loire."

These poor girls were not treated everywhere with so much rigor, and if they were not to be found in the reformers' armies, they led a joyous existence among the Catholic soldiery. Thus, Brantôme describes complacently the dashing rear guard which the Duke of Alba, in his expedition against the *Beggars* of Flanders, reviewed along with the 10,000 men of his veteran troops. "There were," says Brantôme, "400 courtezans on horseback, handsome and brave as princesses, and 800 on foot, similarly well fed (*en point aussi*)." There was there a French gentleman, Messire François Le Poulchre, Seigneur de la Motte Messemé, Knight of the Order of the King, and Captain of fifty of His Majesty's armed men. What he admired the most in this military expedition was the two hundred courtezans "*en bon point*," whose duty it appeared to be was to safeguard the honor of women and girls on the scene of war. Following is the manner in which he speaks of these creatures, in the seven books of his *Honnetes Loisirs*, dedicated to King Henri III (Paris, Marc Ourry, 1587, 12 mo):

*Il les entretenoit, qui vouloit, tout le jour;
Mais, avec un respect plein de cérémonie,
Le barisel-major leur tenoit compagnie.
Or, ces dames avoient tous les soirs leur quartier,
Du maréchal de camp, par les mains du fourrier,
Et n'eût-on pas osé leur faire une insolence.**

*Translator's Note:—

He had their company who would, all day,
But only with a ceremonious show,
For the major was their guest, I'd have you know.
The ladies received their rations every night
From the marshal in the quartermaster's sight,
And none there was would have dared to do them wrong.

Their vanity grew to such a point that they came to play the decent woman and to demand for their favors a price too lofty for the purse of soldiers. It was necessary for the Duke of Alba to cause a proclamation to be cried in his camp by the heralds at arms:

*Qu'entre elles ne fust pas une qui osat
Refuser désormais soldat qui la priast
De luy payer sa chambre a cinq sols par nuictée.**

We should not take the rate fixed by the Duke of Alba as the price current of popular Prostitution of this period. However, it is permissible to suppose, from the chapter of Rabelais entitled: "How Panurge Teaches a Manner Wholly New of Building the Walls of Paris" (*Comment Panurge Enseigne une Manière Bien Nouvelle de Batir les Murailles de Paris*), that the relaxation of public manners had seriously infringed upon the immodest trade of street corner prostitutes. "I see," says Panurge, "that the *callibistris*** of the women of this country are a better bargain than stones; and so of them the walls should be built, arranging them in a good symmetrical architecture, placing the largest in the front row, then arranging beneath them the middle-sized ones and finally the little ones, sloping down like the back of an ass.*** This indecent buffoonery of Panurge's assuredly indicates a drop in the price of debauchery. The closing of the bad houses did not diminish the number of women "of good will." Pierre de l'Estoile, in his *Journal de Henri III*, under the date of the 26th of May, 1575, thus describes the corruption which he saw reigning about him, among the bourgeoisie and the people of Paris: "What the prophet Jeremiah says, in his third chapter, of the Daughters of Zion, who went forth with haughty necks and finical eyes, hoisting and shaking themselves and clacking their heels, might, with good and even better reason,

*Translator's Note:—

That among them none should any longer dare
Refuse a soldier who would pay a fare
Of five sous for a night with her in bed.

**Translator's Note:—The Lacroix text has the erroneous reading, *callibistris*.

***Translator's Note:—(Urquhart and Motteux:) "I see that the sine quo nons, kallibistris, or contrapunctums of the women of this country are better cheap than stones. Of them should the walls be built, ranging them in good symmetry; by the rules of architecture and placing the largest in the first ranks, then sloping downwards ridge-wise like the back of an ass."

have been said in those times of the women of Paris and the maidens of the court. And so it is not to be wondered at if the Lord, according to the threat which he makes in the same place by the mouth of his Prophet, dishevels their heads and their shameful parts by those foolish makers of pasquils with which the city of Paris and the court are filled. In brief, disorder, to speak of nothing worse, was so great that the slander of cuckoldism was one of the most assured sources of revenue in those days." (See the edition published by MM. Champollion, father and son, after the original manuscript of P. de l'Estoile, in the collection of *Mém. pour Servir à l'Histoire de France*.)

We might find, undoubtedly, in the works of the poets of the sixteenth century, a large number of passages relating to our subject, passages which would permit us to draw a faithful and even minute picture of the manners of Prostitution; but we shall hasten to leave this impure century, in which Italian debauchery is the final sewer for the defilement and extinction of the royal line of the Valois; we fear being tempted into too long a digression in leafing through these libertine poets who were pleased to found the Parnassus of Priapus, and who discovered no more inspiring subject than the Venus of the street corner. Certainly the poets were authorized to indulge in all the disorders of erotic poetry, when they met at the houses of the prostitutes the greatest lords of the court, princes of the Church, and venerable magistrates. Did not the Cardinal Charles of Lorraine, as though he had been a young scholar, go to pass the night outside of his lodgings in those of a lost woman? Louis Regnier, Sieur de la Planche, tells us, in his *Histoire de François II*, that this debauched prelate, "emerging one morning from the house of the beauteous Romaine, a renowned courtesan of the time of Henri, who lodged in the Cousture de Sainte Catherine, had missed being mistreated by certain ruffians who were lying in wait for just such prey." This Romaine, who in beauty and libertinism rivalled La Grecque, so exalted by Brantôme, impresses us as being the type of courtesan whom Joachim du Bellay has depicted in a famous poem entitled sometimes *la Maquerelle ou la Vieille Courtisane de Rome*, and sometimes *la Courtisane Repentie*. This poem supplies us with a number of features which help us in compiling a composite portrait of fashionable courtezans of the sixteenth century. It is the courtesan herself who relates her life and who, her own youth being past, endeavors to console her own ennui

*Par les soupirs d'une complainte vaine.**

At the age of sixteen years, corrupted by the bad example of an "immodest mother," she surrenders the flower of her virginity to a serf; but the thing was kept so secret that no one in the world, except her mother, might suspect the accident:

*Bientôt après, je vins entre les mains
De deux ou trois gentilshommes romains,
Desquels je fus aussi vierge rendue,
Comme j'avois pour vierge esté vendue.
De main en main je fus mise en avant,
A cinq or six, vierge comme devant.***

A prelate later purchases her "as a virgin" (*comme pucelle*); she later learns to sing, to dance, to play the lute and to "speak properly" (*proprement parler*); still later, to rouge and to adorn herself. This prelate loved her so much that he could refuse her no sign of his tenderness. He made her rich, and he ended by marrying her off to a gentleman who despoiled her, immediately after the ceremony, of all she had brought to him as a dowry; she finds herself completely ruined:

*Et rejetant toute vergogne et honte,
J'ouvre boutique; et faite plus savante,
Vous mis si bien ma marchandise en vente,
Subtilement affinant les plus fins,
Qu'en peu de temps fameuse je devins.
Lors, me voyant de Rome assez connue
Pour n'estre au rang de squaldrine tenue,
De deux ou trois à poste je me mis,
Lesquels étoient mes plus fermes amis,*

*Translator's Note:—"By vain laments and sighs."

**Translator's Note:—Shortly thereafter, I became the lass
Of two or three Roman gentlemen; to pass
Myself off as a virgin as I'd been
Was as easy thing, as I have ever seen;
From hand to hand, to five or six, I went
And always as a virgin, rest content.

*Et tous les mois me donnoient pour salaire
Un chacun d'eux trente écus d'ordinaire.**

She is not content with these wages, and she employs all sorts of ruses in order to levy a contribution on her three "friends," making each of them believe that she loves him more than the others. They were not young nor handsome, but they were credulous and generous; she, moreover, avoided "more than the plague"

*Ces jeunes, gens, lesquels, sans débourser,
A tout propos, pour beaux veulent passer,
Nous pensant bien payer d'une gambade,
D'une chanson, d'un lut ou d'une aubade.***

She knew all the mysteries of the lives of courtezans, and she employed them to her own advantage, while giving herself the airs of decency and even of prudery:

*J'avais aussi une soigneuse cure,
De n'endurer sur mon corps une ordure,
De boire peu, de manger sobrement,
De sentir bon, me tenir proprement,
Fût en public ou fût dedans ma chambre,
Où l'eau de naffe, et la civette et l'ambre,
Le linge blanc, le pennage éventant,
Et le sachet de poudre bien sentant,
Ne manquoient point out, je prenois garde
(Ruse commune à quiconque se farde)*

**Translator's Note:—*"And then, rejecting modesty and shame,
I open shop, for you have made me wise,
And I know how to sell my merchandise,
Bidding most subtly for the finest trade,
Till, in a short time, I am famous made.
Seeing Rome herself deigns thus to favor me,
They know I can no common strumpet be,
And two or three become my firmest friends,
Whom I employ to further mine own ends,
Since every month each pays, in wages round,
Some thirty crowns in silver, I'll be bound."

***Translator's Note:—*

"Young bloods who never spend a cent,
Yet want to squire us, and think we are content
With a skip, a gambol or a serenade,
A moon-sick song beneath a balustrade."

*Qu'on ne me pût surprendre le matin.
Bref, tout cela qu'enseigne l'Arétin,
Je le savois, et savois mettre en œuvre
Tous le secrets que son livre descoeuve,
Et d'abondant, mille tours inconnus
Pour éveiller la dormante Venus.**

But how she excelled in hiding her profession! She was "respectable in her remarks" (*honneste en ses propos*); she knew how to "talk" (*deviser*) virtue, and she restrained herself so well.

*Que rien qu'honneur ne sortoit de ma bouche,
Sage au parler et folâtre à la couche.***

It was by such means that she "acquired favor" at Rome and at Paris, so that gentlemen were not esteemed who could not boast of having "made love" to her,

*Au demeurant, fût de nuit ou de jour.****

We divine that she had nothing to fear from the police laws relative to "lower class" courtezans:

**Translator's Note:—*

"For I took always a most thoughtful care
To keep my body always free from soil, and fair,
To drink but little, soberly to eat,
To smell good, look good, and be always neat,
In public or within my private room,
Where orange-water, civet and the amber doom
All fouling odors, with fans and linen white
And sachet-powder to perfume the night;
They all are there; above all, I guard well
(As any one who uses rouge can tell)
Against the disillusioning surprise
Of morning light. All Arétino wise
E'er taught I know, and practice all the ruses
A woman learns, when she his book peruses;
And a thousand bonny wiles I know
When Venus at awakening is slow."

Cf. Arétino, *I Ragionamenti*, Second Day, Third Part, the story entitled "The Jealous Husband" in my translation:

"My lady surely is divine;
She passes orange-water, and has the stink
Of musk and ambergris, and civet, too, I think."

Cf., also, the story (Second Part, Second Day), "Mona Quinimima":

"In short, you're not divine, I fear,
Since you don't pass orange-water, dear." etc., etc.

***Translator's Note:—*

"That nothing naughty ever left my head,
But wise in speech and foolish (sportive) in the bed."

****Translator's Note:—*By staying with her, night or day.

*Je ne craignois d'aller sans ma patente,
 Car j'étois franche et de tribut exempte,
 Je n'avois peur d'un gouverneur fâcheux,
 D'un barisel ou d'un sbire outrageux,
 Ni qu'en prison on retint ma personne . . .
 N'ayant jamais faute de la faveur
 D'un cardinal ou autre grand seigneur
 Dont on voyoit ma maison fréquentée,
 Ce qui faisoit que j'étois respectée.**

She had kept this "fine menage" for six or seven years, when, feeling herself growing old, she began to experience shame and repentance; a sermon which she heard one day brought home to her the scandal of her past life. She became aware of all the bitterness that lay in deceitful pleasures of Prostitution:

*Car, quel plaisir, hélas! me pouvoit estre,
 Bien que je prisse à dextre et à senestre,
 A'avoir soumis mes membres éhontés
 A l'appétit de tant de volontés,
 Et d'imiter le vivre d'une beste
 Pour m'enrichir par un gain déshonneste! . . .
 Outre la peur (gesne perpétuelle!)
 D'une vérole ou d'une pèllarelle,
 Et tout cela dont se trouve héritier
 Qui longuement exerce un tel mestier! ***

*Translator's Note:—

I did not fear to go without my pass,
 But went scot-free like any freeborn lass;
 I did not need to fear the annoying ire
 Of governor, bailiff or outrageous squire,
 Or that to prison I might have to go . . .
 The grace of Church and State I never lacked,
 But by some cardinal or lord was backed.
 The gentry filled my house, by day and night,
 And hence it was, I was respected—quite.

**Translator's Note:—"What pleasure, right or left, can I now take,

Now that, alas! all pleasures me forsake?
 My limbs I have subjected without shame
 To the appetites of more than I can name;
 The beasts I've imitated in my life,
 For gain dishonest, to grow rich my strife . . .
 This, to say nothing of the haunting fear
 Of syphilis or such a prospect drear
 As I know well all women are heir to,
 Who such a trade too long a time pursue.

She then enters a convent to do penance and to cleanse herself of her defilement in the practice of an austere devotion; she has bequeathed to the convent the "profits" (*acquets*) of vice, believing that she has no further need for the goods of the earth. But boredom is not slow in laying hold of her; she repents "of having repented," hurls her nun's frock into the bushes, and endeavors to take up her former mode of life: it is too late! Adieu the great lords and perfumed loves! See coming, with the "gouty vèrole,"

La dentrelle et pelade honteuse;

see coming the public executioner, whom she receives in her bed "in place of a gentleman," and who recompenses her for her favors by himself fustigating her in the public square!

CHAPTER LXXIII

IN ALL ages, there have existed intimate relations, striking analogies, singular affinities between French manners and French modes, so that one might, almost for a certainty, judge one by the other; when manners are pure, austere and well regulated, the modes are simple, decent and respectable; on the other hand, if the modes are extravagant, dissolute and obscene, manners must be unbridled, corrupt and scandalous. Dress, at every period of our national history, has been, so to speak, a faithful mirror of the manners of private life. The mere sight, for example, of the exact costumes of the men and women of the sixteenth century would enable us to recognize, for a certainty, the fact that that century was, above all that had gone before, the most inclined, the most propitious and the most indulgent toward Prostitution.

It would be easy to compile a history of costumes in France, from the point of view of manners, from the most remote times. We shall have to limit ourselves here to seeking, in episodic fashion, the salient characteristics of what might be termed Sartorial Prostitution, with reference to either sex. We have no desire other than merely to skim over this vast and curious subject; but we shall say enough of it, in the course of this rapid sketch, to establish the point that fashion was ever, among our ancestors, a reflection of manners. The mode is ordinarily but a form and an expression of luxury, which has so sorry an influence over public morality, and which opens the gate, so to speak, to all distractions, to all disorders, to all vices. The love of luxury leads to debauchery and counsels Prostitution; it is the attraction and the bait of the evil passions. There is, in a whole people, an ardent and disorderly emulation in the pursuit of evil, when the sole end of all thought and all human activity is nothing more than the immoderate satisfaction of the senses and of vanity; it is then that the mode becomes, simultaneously, a parade of pride and an excitation to incontinence.

Many times have sovereigns endeavored to impose limits on the outbursts of luxury; they have regulated, by means of sumptuary laws, the dress or the *livery* of each class of citizens; but they have merely concerned themselves with the quality and the value of

material objects, which they have sought to authorize or to interdict; their prescriptions have been, thus, purely economic and political. Sometimes, they have desired that each one be clad according to his rank, and that "by means of habits," as an ordinance of Charles VII phrases the matter, one might be able to recognize the "vocations of folk, either princes, noblemen, bourgeois, merchants or tradesmen;" sometimes they have desired to prevent their subjects from ruining themselves "in habiliments too pompous and too sumptuous, not suitable to their state," as in an ordinance of Charles VIII, which goes on to recall the fact that "such abuses are displeasing to God, our Creator;" sometimes they have desired to prevent the country from being impoverished by the purchase of certain stuffs, which would cause a good part of the currency to leave the realm, as an ordinance of Charles IX points out; but they have not appeared to be concerned with maintaining decency of costume by means of fixed regulations and severe penalties. It has been the business of the ecclesiastical powers to recommend, to demand and to impose modesty of habits; it is this power alone which has possessed the right of condemning, proscribing and anathematizing those modes which are not in harmony with the modesty which the Christian religion commands for all its children. We meet here and there with certain police ordinances, certain decrees of Parliament, which forbid the wearing of *dissolute habits*; but under this head are not designated those immodest habiliments in which the two sexes have indulged a desire out of a refinement of gallantry and sensuality. The civil law deals only with excesses of luxury; the religious law, and especially the moral law, since the introduction of Christianity among the Gauls, alone has been in a position to repress the license of fashion and to keep a watch over costumes from the point of view of morals.

In the early days of the monarchy, men and women wore long and flowing vestments, which concealed all movements of the body, and which did not leave any part of the body uncovered. The French had adopted the Roman costume, the toga and the tunic, while preserving the breeches of the barbaric peoples.*

The dress of women, still more simple than that of men, was composed of a woollen tunic with large folds flowing down over the ankles,

*Translator's Note:—Late Latin *bracae* (in Mss. also *braccae*). Originally worn by the Persians, Indians and Germans as well as the Gauls: referred to by Virgil, *Aeneid*, 11,777, as "*barbara tegima crurum*." Also worn among the Romans in the time of the emperors.

with a mantle gathered over the shoulder. They wore, in addition, a long veil, in which they draped themselves from head to foot, and which they fastened over the ear with a metal clasp. A woman in those days, no matter what might have been her rank, never showed herself in public unveiled, and was very careful not to display under the veil any outline which might reveal her sex. Love of adornment, that distinctive trait of the nation, was only revealed by a number of massive bracelets, rings, necklaces and jewels of every sort. The woman who was the most laden with gold was the best adorned, and it is easy to understand how this need of expensive brilliancy must sometimes have caused virtue to totter. But the fair sex soon came to be more jealous of its own rights and advantages; the women began to wear tunics, the corsage of which outlined the figure and was tight-fitting around the throat; then, the tunics began to be hollowed out about the throat and down to the shoulders; a little later, in order to give more grace to the stride, the women began to draw up their robe above the girdle, in such a manner as to outline the haunches, the thighs and the loins, which before had been lost under the thick folds of the petticoat. However, it does not appear that a woman "of good life" would have dared, prior to the 12th century, to affront the gaze of men with a vestment permitting a sight of the breast, the shoulders and the arms.

It was, perhaps, the men who were first responsible for this relaxation in the decency of national costumes; Charlemagne had endeavored to restore the national garb to its ancient Frankish simplicity. At a synod held at Rheims, in the year 972, Raoul, Abbot of St. Remi, complains of the fact that nuns, drawing their tunics over their haunches and spreading out their legs, resemble from the rear courtesans rather than nuns. (*Arctatis clunibus, potius meretriculis quam monachis tergo assimilentur.*) These same nuns wore immodest (*iniqua*) stockings of an inordinate size, made of material so light that they hid nothing (*ex staminis subtilitate etiam pudenda intuentibus non protegunt.*) From this period, slippers *à la poulaine*, *à griffe* or *à bec*, which were pursued for more than four centuries by the anathemas of popes and the invectives of preachers, came into use. These slippers were always looked upon by the casuists in the Middle Ages as the most abominable emblem of immodesty. It is not wholly evident, at first glance of the eye, what there was that was so scandalous

about these slippers terminating at the toe sometimes in the claw (*griffe*) of a lion, sometimes in the beak (*bec*) of an eagle, sometimes in the prow (*prow*) of a ship or in some other metal appendage. The excommunication inflicted on this species of footwear was a result of the immodest ingenuity of certain libertines, who were in the habit of wearing *poulaines* in the form of a phallus. These phallic *poulaines* were also adopted by the women, who perhaps were unaware what it was that fashion had decreed they should wear on the tips of their shoes. This *poulaine*, which was described as "cursed of God" (see the *Glossary* of Ducange, under the word POULAINIA), was likewise prohibited by the ordinance of the kings. Nevertheless, great ladies and grand lords did not discontinue to wear *poulaines*, though more respectable ones, undoubtedly, than those which had so strongly excited the indignation of the Church, and which, according to the expression of the continuator of Guillaume de Nangis, appeared to have been designed with the object of displacing the human member; it was for this reason that Charles V, in concert with the Pope of Avignon, Urban V, forbade the use of this villainous footwear. (*Quia res erat valde turpis et quasi contra creationem naturalium membrorum circa pedes, quin imo abusus naturae videbatur.* Continuator Nantii, ann. 1365.). Fashion held its own against royal edicts, since under Louis XI those of the court still wore *poulaines* of *un quartier de long* (that is to say, a quarter of an ell in length); it is Monstrelet who gives us this information, or, at least, his continuator. But these *poulaines*, which had come to be called *becs de canne*, no longer affected obscene forms but only semispiral shapes, like Chinese and Turkish slippers.

To the Crusades must evidently be assigned the alteration of the national costume of France; the modes of the Orient were brought in by the Crusaders, along with the silken stuffs of Eastern countries, and the young French nobility became effeminate, so to speak, through adopting the habits of Asiatic luxury. There was no longer anything to be seen except cloth of gold (*draps battus d'or*), cloth of scarlet, *riche siglaton* and *samit ouvré* (as the *Chanson d'Antioche* says), precious furs, embroideries and valances, in place of the rough woolen garments, of hair-cloth and goat-skin and of drugget (*bureau*), which so long had sufficed our ancestors. We have seen how prejudicial this new luxury was to good manners. It might be stated with certainty that from this period, in particular, the women permitted themselves to be seduced into all the excesses of the toilette. It was from the end

of the 12th century that they began renouncing simplicity and chastity of vestments in order to follow with passion the cult of fashion, which became from then on a wholly French divinity. Following are the terms in which the historian, Robert Gaguin, lets himself go against this profane cult, which appeared to have been an invention of the Devil: "This nation," he says, in speaking of the French, "daily given over to pride and debauchery, commits nothing but stupidities; sometimes the habits which she adopts are too wide, sometimes they are too narrow, at one time, they are too long, at another too short. Always avid of novelty, she is unable to preserve, for the space of ten years, the same form of vestment." (*Compendium Roberti Gaguini*, Book VIII, Anno 1346.)

It might be said that, throughout the whole of the Middle Ages, there was a sort of tacit understanding among the creators of the mode to *deform* the body of man by ridiculous or monstrous habits (this is what one chronicler, *Gaufredus Vosinsis*, calls *deformitas vestium*), and to give to the creature of God traits borrowed from the Devil, which the imagination of painters and image-makers had created. Thus, we may look upon the *poulaines* as an imitation of the cloven hoof, commonly attributed to Satan and to his infernal family. Hence, undoubtedly, the wrath of the ecclesiastics against the audacious pretense of achieving a physical resemblance to the Evil Spirit. It was, certainly, to the same source that the mode of the 14th century went to seek its tails and its horns. These horns, "marvelously tall and wide," which adorned the feminine coiffure on each side of the head, from the time of Charles VI had taken on such a dimension that the doors of rooms were not large enough to permit a wearer of these horns to pass through in comfort. A court preacher fulminated against these horns as his predecessors had against the *poulaines*. "Following his lashing," related Juvenal des Ursins in his *Chronicle*, "the ladies lifted up their horns and did like the snails, which, when they hear some noise, retire and draw in their horns most beautifully." The queues or tails, on which the preachers also declared war, made their appearance at the bottom of the robe and at the extremity of the hood. The tails attached to the robes, which Olivier Maillard, in a number of his sermons, refers to as "diabolic inventions," remained in use at the court under the protection of etiquette. As to the tails on the hoods, which fell down the backs of men and women all the way to the ground, they were drawn up at first over the shoulder, and later

twined about the neck, before being cut off entirely. It was, perhaps, a Satanic pride which had made claws (*griffes*), tails and horns fashionable; it was, probably, a depraved taste that counseled men and women to diminish or augment, by means of their attire, the portions of certain parts of their bodies. The origin of these deceptions in costume was, it is true, the desire to correct nature in whatever point she might be defective or imperfect. An attempt was naturally made, with the aid of the resources of the toilette, to seek the means of hiding defects of form: the woman who was too thin desired to appear corpulent; the woman who was too corpulent wanted to hide her excessive embonpoint. "The truth is," says Marie de Romieu, in her *Instruction pour les Jeunes Dames*, published in 1573, "the truth is, there is need of remedying the defects and imperfections of nature as much as possible." But it is well to recognize the fact that the majority of these exaggerations of the "mould of fashion" (*moule de l'habit*) are the result of a desire to satisfy the instincts and caprices of debauchery, for they all have something to do, by preference, with those parts of the body which play the essential role in the imagination of the licentious. Thus, with women, it is the loins, the haunches, the figure, the thighs, and the throat which, from all times, have especially stimulated the art of the *couturière* and the *lingrèe*; among men, it is likewise the most indecent members which the industry of the tailor endeavors to put in relief and to reveal to the eyes with a brazen cynicism. This indecent affectation in the attire of the two sexes was never more evident than at the time of Charles VI, and one is forced to attribute to the coquetry of Queen Isabeau the disorderly fashions of her time, when the Prostitution of manners was so audaciously reflected in the costumes of the court. Christine de Pisan, the "modest" (*preude*) and chaste Christine, who was then composing her *Trésor de la Cité des Dames*, undoubtedly did not enjoy much prestige in this depraved society, which was little concerned in learning from her "how women of the state should be orderly in their habits." Christine recommended to them expressly not to be "outrageous in their vestments and habiliments, in costumes as in fashions." One of the reasons which she adduced against this immoderate and fashionable luxury was "that a woman, by a disorderly and outrageous habit, occasions another to sin, either by imitation or through disordered desire." Sensual desire is, as a matter of fact, one of the evil passions to which the mode addresses itself with the most malice, and Christine

de Pisan remarked very wisely that "the most perilous inconvenience which might happen to a woman by reason of a disorderly habit and an indecent manner is the amusement of foolish men, who may think that she has the ambition to be coveted and desired for a light love." Following then are the virtuous instructions which she gives the ladies and damsels, who do not greatly profit from it: "It is therefore the duty of every woman who would guard her good renown to be decent and without disguise in her habit, which should not be too constricted nor with too great collars nor other indecent fashion, nor should she be a great seeker of new things, especially those which are not decent. And with all this, manner and countenance do much. Where there is nothing that more detracts from a woman than an ugly and unsober manner, likewise there is nothing more pleasant than a beautiful countenance and a coy mien."

But in spite of these sage and honorable counsels, the contemporaries of Christine de Pisan were not content with their *hennins* or high bonnets to the ears, adorned with horns, with their trailing-tailed robes, with their *surcots*, or narrow corsages, with their *souliers à poulaines* and all the trappings of their *estats de bombans*; they set themselves to show that they were *en bon point*. The poet of the court of Charles VI, Eustache Deschamps, in his poem entitled the *Mirouer de Mariage*, encourages those demoiselles in search of husbands to adopt the robes "of new make" (*de nouvelle forge*), with large open collars, made in such a manner as to render "more apparent" the bosom and the throat.

But although thinness was rarer among women formerly than it is today, there were also thin women who would have looked upon themselves as dishonored if they had not achieved by means of artifice the embonpoint which they lacked. This was, it is true, the infancy of the age of "false appliances" (*faux appas*), which, from that time down to our day, have not ceased to constitute an essential part of the toilette. The poet Eustache Deschamps, in his poem on the *Mirouer de Mariage*, is careful not to forget these; he even takes the pains to indicate the means of manufacturing them, with "two sacks," thus practically anticipating the modern well stuffed corset.

This is not all; a woman in the mode had to make her haunches stand out and give to her posterior outlines as much amplitude and prominence as nature might permit. The least artificial process consisted in girdling the figure tightly so that the loins might appear

larger and better developed under the bust, which was narrowed by a flat and closely adhering corsage.

Eustache Deschamps describes this process with as much detail as though he had studied poetry with a *tailleur de robes*. According to his description, the robe of a woman of fashion had to be "narrow in the waist," very much stuffed about the loins, puffed in the rear, and set off with that accessory known as the "bustle" (*tournure*), while the garment was less ample below the knees and fell thoroughly well (*à fond de cuve*) over the feet.

The manuscript miniatures of the time permit us to form an idea of the strange appearance which such robes gave women, the stiff look and the disgraceful outlines.

In this system, the breast was entirely uncovered, *pectus discopertum usque ad ventrem*, as Olivier Maillard says in one of his sermons. This species of robe, open in the front down to the belly, had been conceived by Queen Isabeau, and the people, who were indignant at this outrageous mode, had nicknamed these the robes *à la grand-gore*; they also applied the name of *gorières* to the women who wore them, and they regarded as public women those who did not take the precaution of closing with an *affiche*, or metal brooch, the opening in their corsage.

From the end of the 14th century, there was always in the modes of women an intention, more or less eccentrically marked, of showing what one pretended that one wished to concealed.

If the license of manners at this period induced immorality of costume, if the love of luxury was the principal agent of Prostitution, it must nevertheless be remarked that gallantry found therein a good chance to teach women the proper care of their bodies, women who before had been very unclean and very thoughtless of their persons. A popular proverb, reported and commentated by Beroalde de Verville, in his *Moyen de Parvenir*, proves clearly enough that respectable women could pride themselves on never indulging in secret ablutions. According to this obscene proverb, the courtezans were the only ones who did not limit themselves to washing their faces and hands. It was, evidently, the desire and need of pleasing which taught ladies and young ladies to keep themselves "very clean and very proper" (*bien nettes et bien propres*), to perfume themselves and to combat with good odors the nauseous emanations of human infirmity. It would appear, however, that certain needs of the toilette were looked upon at first

with reprehension, owing to national prejudice, and that their satisfaction was for a long time frowned upon; but if the women surrounded with the deepest mysteries these delicacies of the toilette, they did not fear to confess the use which they made of rouges and perfumes, which had won them the nickname of "lilies" (*muquettes*). It was not until the 16th century that proper care of the body became an essential condition of feminine beauty. Marie de Romieu, in her *Instruction pour les Jeunes Dames*, does not blush to invite the ladies to "keep themselves very clean, if only for the satisfaction of themselves or a husband." She expresses herself upon this subject as a woman who has recognized the fact that water does not exist merely for the shame of her sex; "There is no need," she says, "to do as some whom I know, who have no care to keep themselves clean except in those parts which may be seen, remaining filthy and unclean in those parts which are under linen. But as I see it, a beautiful damsel should bathe herself frequently in water in which have been boiled good odors, for there is nothing more certain than that the flower of a young lady's beauty is the ability to keep herself clean." It may be seen, in the *Controverses du Sexe Masculin et Féminin* of Gratian du Tont, Seigneur de Drusac, published in 1630, that, notwithstanding the natural laws of propriety the women employed odors rather than clear water; they thus merely increased the bad odor which they wished to disguise. The Seigneur de Drusac says that some, the fat ones especially, wore perfumed sponges

*Entre leurs cuisses et dessoubz les aisselles,
Pour ne sentir l'espaule de mouton,
Le faguenas et telz senteurs infames. . . .**

It is necessary to read these *Controverses* in order to form an idea of the bodily uncleanness of the majority of the women, and especially of the good women, despite their curious passion for perfumes, which they did not look upon as a dishonor. The Seigneur de Drusac reports, among their *grandes habiletéz*, that they frequently wore drawers, or *tire brayes*, when they danced the Lombard or *gaillarde* dances, and these drawers, invented "to keep the bowels from falling," were ordinarily full of soil and smelled worse than a latrine (*retrait*). Was not this a marvelous preservative of their virtue?

**Translator's Note:—*"Between the thighs and under the armpits, in order not to smell like a shoulder of mutton, with all sorts of infamous odors."

The baths of river waters, cold or tepid, were scarcely in use at all before the 17th century; ablutions were only performed in rich houses upon a return from a journey or at the moment of sitting down to table. We see, in the *Chronique Scandaleuse de Louis XI*, that this King, going to sup and lodge at the houses of some good citizens of Paris, always found there a hot bath in waiting. But nothing was less general than this sort of luxurious bath. One was ordinarily content with vapor baths, for which one went to the sweating-rooms. These public establishments became multiplied at Paris, about the 12th century, and were greatly in vogue down to the end of the 16th century, when they were wholly abandoned, one does not know why. There were no other baths, and no others were desired. It was an imitation of Oriental habits which the Crusaders had brought into France. But the women, those at least who looked to their reputation, did not go to the sweating-rooms. One met there only chambermaids, "gossips," women of evil life. "Also," remarked Christine de Pisan, "baths, sweating-rooms and resorts of 'gossips' (*commèrages*) are too much haunted by women, and such associations, without necessity or good cause, are but superfluous expense, without any good being able to come of them, and from all such things and others like them, woman, if she is wise, and loves honor, and wishes to avoid blame, should guard herself." It is evident, from a multitude of statements which are all in agreement, that a woman who frequented the sweating-rooms did so at the expense of her moral purity. That is why these sweating-rooms were all very like houses of Prostitution.

The men might pride themselves on being harder to please in the matter of cleanliness than the women; they were also less given to odors (*senteurs*) and to rouge (*fardements*). They came to model themselves, nevertheless, in matters of fashion and the toilette, after the sex which was always the sovereign arbiter of these *mondanités*. At a period when luxury of habits was accompanied by depravity of manners, the men as well as the women were pleased, according to Dulaure's expression, to "disfigure their bodies" (*défigurer le nu*) and to make over, so to speak, the work of the Creator under the inspiration of an indecent or profligate idea. Thus, when the women devoted their attention to emphasizing the outlines of their bosoms, of their thighs, of their loins, and even of their bellies, the men, Monstrelet tells us, "took to wearing their robes shorter than they ever had done before, so that one might see the fashion of their buttocks and their

genital parts, as was the habit of dressing apes, which was a very unfortunate and very immodest thing. They wore also on their doublets great pads to show that they were large in the shoulders." These *mahoîtres* were a sort of cushion which augmented the breadth of the shoulders and upper arms. The sparest dandy (*muquet*) thus gave himself the appearance of a Hercules. Masculine vanity did not stop there. "Under the reign of Charles VII were to be seen everywhere," says M. Ludovic Lalanne, in the *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique de la France* (article on Costumes), "along with the fashion of artificial or cushioned shoulders called *mahoîtres*, from which shoulders hung slashed sleeves, the fashion also of *eraguettes*, or sheaths, which were gathered at the top of the stockings, and which were adorned with fringes and ribbon stuffs."

The historians of fashion speak only with an extreme reserve of that part of the *haut de chausses*, or rather of that bizarre appendage, which was called *braguette* or *brayette* in the 15th and 16th centuries, and which it would be difficult to regard as a historic mode, if it were not to be found in the ancient pictures and engravings. It was, in the beginning, a leather purse or sheath, entirely separate from the small-clothes, to which it was fastened by means of knots or aglets. It is obvious that this singular vestment was at first only worn by the people; but it was found convenient, and as soon as the eyes grew accustomed to it, the bourgeoisie and the nobility in succession did not disdain to make use of it. Soon all men, whatever their rank, the king as well as the street porter, were sporting the *braguette* and displaying it to the glances of the ladies who were no longer offended by it. The origin of the *braguette* goes back undoubtedly to defensive armor, and one might read, on this subject, a chapter of the *Pantagruel* (Book III) entitled: Why the *Braguette* is the First Piece of Harness with Warriors (*Comment la Braguette est la Première Pièce de Harnoys Entre Gens de Guerre*). When warriors were covered from head to foot with plates or rings of iron, a box of metal, lined on the inside with a sponge, was used to protect their natural parts; this box came to be replaced by a steel lattice and later by a leather purse. The leather gave way to wool and silk. when the *braguette* became an article of civil attire, and to draw to it the more the attention of persons who no longer thought of being scandalized at the sight of it, it was enlivened with ribbons, with gilt trimmings and even with jewels. A passage of the *Gargantua*, in which Rabelais describes minutely the

costume of his hero, gives an exact idea of the effect produced by one of these monstrous braguettes, which were "full," he says, "only of wind." One should not forget that Gargantua was an enormous giant, who *compissait* on the Parisians from the top of the towers of Notre Dame: "For his braguette were taken sixteen ells and a quarter of the same material (white estamet), and the form of it was that of a buttress, joyously well attached to two handsome buckles of gold, with two hooks of enamel, in each of which was set a great emerald of the size of pomegranate. For, (as Orpheus says, *libro de Lapidibus*, and Pliny *libro ultimo*) it possessed virtues erective and conformative to the natural member. The opening of the braguette was of the length of a cane, slashed like smallclothes, with blue damask in the front. But seeing the beautiful border of *canetille* and the pleasant meshings of goldsmith work, set off with fine diamonds, fine rubies, fine turquoises, fine emeralds and Persian pearls, you would have compared it to a beautiful cornucopia, such as those you see at the antiquaries, and such as Rhea gave the two nymphs, Adrastea and Ida, Jupiter's nurses: always gallant, always succulent, always dripping, always verdant, always flourishing, always fructifying, full of humors, full of flowers, full of fruits, full of all delights. I vow to God but it was a sight to see!" Rabelais concerns himself so frequently with braguettes in the course of his joyous romance, that we may gather therefrom the important rôle they played in the world. Rabelais even speaks of a book which he had composed "on the dignity of braguettes!"

These terrible braguettes* held their own and were displayed in public down to the reign of Henri III, when tailors had the modesty to conceal them in the form of smallclothes *à la suisse* or *à la martin-gale*; their name merely remained attached to the mobile part, less apparent and more modest, which was one piece with the vestment, and which was always closed with eyelets. Moreover, in the course of the 16th century, the costume of men, without becoming once more long and flowing, affected a decency which it never had had before, although old men and libertines still preserved the old-time braguette, "that vain and futile model of a member which we do not even dare to

**Translator's Note*:—(J. U. N.) Icel. Bragga, to adorn; O. F. Brague, merriment; Armor. Braga, to flaunt; W. Bragiaw, to swell out; Gael. Breagh, fine, pretty, splendid: whence our Brag. Cf. O. Eng. Braget and Bragot; W. Bragawd; Corn. Bregawd, to swell out: whence our noun Bragget, a fermented liquor. Cf. also Eng. Brail, a piece of leather to bind up a hawk's wing; from O. Eng. Brayle, from O. F. Braye, breeches, from O. F. Braiel (Braiol, Braioel), a band placed about the loins.

name with decency, but of which we ever make a show and parade in public" (*Essais* of Michel de Montaigne, Book I, Chapter 22). Padded vestments were the mode, but it appears that no indecent thought was attached to this mania of placing cotton everywhere and thus puffing out the bust, the paunch, the buttocks and the loins with whalebone and with cushioned pads. We have seen, however, that the Italian manners, which then were prevalent at the court of France, were alone responsible for this show of rounded and provocative forms, which the young debauchees like to find in women. The latter, at least, were faithful to the traditions of their sex by showing as much of the throat as possible and by disputing among themselves the attributes of Venus Callipyge. It was then that *Vertugales* and *basquines* were invented and created a furore. A commentator of the *Satyre Ménippée* (edition of Ratisbonne, 1726, Volume II, page 388) says that these *vertugales* had been conceived by the courtezans "to hide their pregnancies." And so, when decent women began to revive and adopt the *vertugales*, a friar who was then preaching at Paris remarked in his sermon that the ladies had forsaken their *vertu* but that the *gale* had remained. (See the *Apologie pour Hérodote* of H. Estienne, Volume I, page 310, edition of Le Duchat.) This fashion was already at the height of its vogue in 1550; a moral and facetious poet published about that time the satire, or *Blason des Basquines et Vertugales, avec la Belle Remonestrance q'Ont Fait Quelques Dames, Quand on Leur a Remonstré qu'il n'en Falloit Plus Porter*.^{*} This piece enjoyed sufficient popularity to excite the satiric verve of imitators; one of them composed and published the *Complainte de Monsieur le C. . . ., Contre les Inventeurs des Vertugales*; another, the *Response de la Vertugale au C. . . ., en Forme d'Invective*. These large pads which the women wore under their robes and about their loins had assumed metaphorically a grosser name, which was prevalent in ordinary speech for more than forty years. When a lady wished to go out, she would say to her chambermaids: "Bring me my behind!" And the chambermaids who went to look for it would say to one another: "Madame's behind is not to be found! Madame's behind is lost!" (See the *Dial du Nouveau Langue Francois Italianisé* by H. Estienne, edition of Antwerp, 1579, page 202.) We read also in the *Satyre Ménippée*, written in 1593: "Similarly was it enjoined on women to wear great behinds (*culs*) and to enjoy

^{*}Translator's Note:—"Blazon of the *Basquines* and *Vertugales*, with the Pretty Remonstrance which Certain Ladies Made, When They Were Told That They Should No Longer Wear Them."

themselves in all security beneath them, without fearing the babbling of the midwives."

The smutty word of which the greatest ladies did not hesitate to make use in designating their basquines and their vertugales had been created by the people, who found it difficult to become accustomed to such a mode. Evil tongues pursued with smutty and insulting remarks those vertugales which dared to make their appearance in the streets and on the promenades. One of these *brocards* ran:

. . . *O la gente musquine!*
Qu'elle a une belle basquine!
Sa vertugalle est bien troussée
*Pour estre bientost engrossée!**

The other ran:

. . . *O quel plaisir,*
Qui pourroit tenir à loisir
Ceste busquée si mignonne,
*Qui a si avenante trogne!***

The anonymous author of the *Blason des Vertugales* makes war on these articles from the Christian point of view and pictures them as "infamous and dissolute" (*dissolutions et infâmes*), serving but to engender scandal and bring folk to damnation. He even attempts to prove that every woman who dishonors herself by this dissolute mode is a lecheress (*paillard*) or a gossip (*médisant*) or an "evil procuress" or an adulterous wife. The author of the *Complainte* treats the thing with less severity; he complains merely that the *vertugale* exposes the virtue of women still further to assaults and perils against which the tight bodice would be at least some protection. He portrays, in the freest terms, the complacent rôle which the *vertugale* plays when a gallant desires to arrive at his ends: he assumes that Lucifer, or his

**Translator's Note*:—Oh, the naughty lass!
 What a pretty skirt she has!
 Her farthingale is right in tune
 To make her pregnant very soon.

***Translator's Note*:—Oh, what pleasure
 To hold upon your knee at leisure
 That little dear of buskéd grace,
 With the prepossessing face!

servant must undoubtedly have invented a mode so favorable to debauchery in order to compromise the modesty of women by causing them to fall over backwards:

*Depuis qu'on les a inventées,
On voit les femmes effrontées
Et, si elles font renversure,
On les voit jusqu'à la fressure.**

The *vertugale*, in its *Réponse à Monsieur le C. . .*, does not spare the villain who has indulged in an invective against it; it says its say with an incredible freedom and expatiates with pride upon its own merits.

*Faïcte je suys pour grandes dames
Vertueuses de corps et d'ames,
Faïcte je suys pour damoiselles
Qui ont vers leurs marys bons zelles.
Je dis qu'une femme de bien,
Pour avoir meilleur entretien
Et plaire plus fort à son homme,
Me veust porter, voyre dans Rome,
Non pas une femme commune
Qui change ainsi comme la lune. . .
Bien venue suys en la court,
Pourceu que l'argent ne soit court.
Là tout le monde me salue,
Là je suys le très bien venue!***

**Translator's Note*:—Since these objects saw the light,
Women have been brazen quite,
And if one fell upon her back,
You'd see the whole way to her crack.

***Translator's Note*:—Made am I for ladies great,
Of soul and body immaculate;
Made am I for a damoiselle
Who wishes her husband very well;
And I will even dare to say
That she who would enjoy love's way
And greatly please her man at home,
She ought to wear me, even in Rome;
For I'm no strumpet, you'll see soon,
Who changes thus with every moon . . .
I'm always welcome in the court,
When the silver is not short
Yea, all the world salutes me there,
And I am welcome, I'll declare!

The author of the *Réponse* does not admit, then, that the *vertugales* may be misused, and this mode, the invention of which he attributes to a "wise man" (*homme sage*), is boldly justified in the face of the reproaches which had been heaped upon it, of being more suited to women of disorderly life. He goes back to the source of this calumny and relates that a *vertugale*, having been stolen by a procurer (*cita-doux*), arrived at a bad house in the Champ-Gaillard and was given as a present to a *fille d'amour*, who dared to adorn herself with it, to go to mass and to "raise a fanfare" in the open street. But this girl, not knowing how to wear this accoutrement, which was new to her, had no sooner set her foot out of doors, than she fell on her rear and remained for an hour and a half in a very embarrassing position:

*Et lors monstroît ses gringuenauldes,
Plus dures que les baguenaudes
Qui pendoient de son cul infect.**

The *vertugales*, at least, were wholly innocent of the villainous sights which their indiscreet use occasionally permitted, for they had been conceived, so it is said, only to permit the air to circulate beneath the robes and to preserve there a fresh temperature, being thus as salutary in preserving the health of bodies as they were useful in repressing the ardor of the senses. This destination of the *vertugales* is plainly indicated in these verses of the *Complainte*:

*Maudits soient ces beaux inventeurs,
Ces coyons, ces passementeurs
De vertugalles et basquines,
Que portent un tas de musquines
Pour donner air à leur devant!***

The *vertugales* served also to hide a pregnancy for five or six months and to preserve in pregnant women the appearance of a fine and gracious figure. It would appear, from a passage in the *Dialogues de Langue François Italianisé*, that this mode, which singularly developed

*Translator's Note:—And then she showed the dirty ruts,
Harder far than bladder-nuts
On her unclean behind.

**Translator's Note:—Cursed be those dastard chaps
Who invented all these traps,
These farthingales and skirts,
For they have led a lot of flirts
To take the air in front!

the circumference of the belly and the loins, did not at first have for object the developing of a posterior *embonpoint* on women who lacked it, for, in the middle of the 16th century, the thin ones were more esteemed than the fat ones. "The Venetian ladies," says the Frenchman who figures in the *Dialogues*, "seek by all means to be not only *en bon point*, but fat, and they tell me that, for this purpose, they use, among their viands, much of the Indian nut, and you know that our own hate and flee that." To express the fact that all was not cotton and padding in the *vertugales* of a woman, one praised her by making use of this Italianism: *C'est une bonne robbe!** But the gentlemen prided themselves on loving flesh and not fat, an idea that is well brought out in this profession of faith on the part of a debauched Latinist: *Carnarius sum, pinguarius non sum.*** The *vertugales* were abandoned under the reign of Louis XIII, but they reappeared at long intervals, with less fantastic proportions, under the names of *vertugadin*, *paniers*, *nustucru*, *tournure*, etc. These garments brought back with them an ancient custom which had less to do with cleanliness than with modesty: women resumed wearing drawers (*caléçons*) in order to protect themselves against cold and dust, as well as the shame which might come to them if they suffered a fall. Moreover, "these drawers," as the "Italianized" Frenchman of the *Dialogues* of Henri Estienne remarks, "assured them also against certain dissolute young fellows, for, upon putting their hands under them, they were not able to touch the flesh."

It is our opinion that the fashion of drawers for women was essentially French, for this mode, already introduced at court about the end of the 14th century, was recommended by reasons of utility and decency. But the fashion of open robes, décolleté and open-breasted, which held sway so audaciously throughout the 16th century, had been naturalized in France along with Italian manners under the reign of Francis I. At this period, the people applied the epithet of *dames à la grand gore* to those women who wore robes open over the bosom; the people had then no more than a vague memory of those *robes à la grand gore* which had scandalized them so when Isabeau of Bavaria had brought them into fashion. It was evidently Italy which set the example in this new abuse of throat-nudity. A facetious bit, printed

*Translator's Note:—*Buona roba*: (our modernism) "good stuff," "good booty." Cf. Old German *roub*, "booty."

**Translator's Note:—"I am a fancier of flesh, not of fat."

in 1612, and having for title *la Mode qui Court et les Singularités d'Icelle*, authorizes us in believing such an accusation against "Chouse", which was the name given to Italianized France.

"Chouse," says the author of *La Mode qui Court*, "has also conceived the idea of representing the breasts as bounding and elevated by implements in the front, for whomsoever may care to behold, as a pastime; and accordingly, one says:

*Jeanne, qui fait de son teton parure,
Fait veoir à tous que Jeanne veut pasture.***

The poets and the romancers of that time all tell us of the prodigious untidiness which was favored by the use of corsets equipped with steel stays, with whalebone and with wire. In the *Discours Nouveau de la Mode*, an excellent satire in verse published in 1613, the anonymous author, after having given us, without too much repugnance, a picture

*D'un large sein le tetin bondissant,***

informs us that, if, through a remnant of modesty, the "goodman's wife" still employed "*points coupes*" and "*ouvrages de prix*" to cover her throat, instead of having as before, "the top of the robe closed, with a buckle, the ladies of quality,

*. . . Au moins pour la plus part, m'ont cure
D'avoir en cest endroit aucune couverture;
Elles aiment bien mieux avoir le sein ouvert
Et plus de la moitié du tetin decouvert;
Elles aiment bien mieux, de leur blanche poitrine,
Faire paroistre à nud la candeur alabastrine,
D'ou elles tirent de traits luxurieux
Cent et cent mille fois, qu'elles ne font des yeux.****

*Translator's Note:—(Freely:)

Jeanne who thus adorns her teat
Makes known to all that she is meat.
(Our modern "meat" being equivalent to "pasture" here.)

**Translator's Note:—Of a spacious bosom with bounding teat.

***Translator's Note:—At least the most of them do not care
For any sort of covering there;
They'd leave the breast quite unconcealed
With the better half of the teat revealed,
For with their bosoms white as cream,
They rival alabaster's gleam,
And win by far more manly hearts
Than ever eyes with all their darts.

It might be said that never, at any epoch, had women of high station devoted so much attention to the art of acquiring a beautiful growth and of appearing *en bonne conche*, as one said then; the thinnest of them found a means of displaying the likeness of an embonpoint which reposed upon padded cushions; the fattest did not seek to dissimulate the enormity of their "*tablature*," according to an equivocal expression borrowed from the musical notation of the times. Even the old ones did not feel that they should be exempt from this indecent abuse of throat nudity. The *Divorce Satyrique* pictures for us Queen Marguerite, at the age of fifty or fifty-five years, going to receive holy communion three times a week, "her face plastered and covered with rouge, with a great uncovered throat which more properly resembled a behind than a bosom." (See the *Div. Satyr.*, following the *Journal de l'Estoile*, edition of 1744, Volume IV, page 511.) And yet Brantôme, in his *Dames Galantes*, which he caused to be read in manuscript to Queen Marguerite, does not appear to fear a disagreeable allusion to this Princess, when he speaks undisguisedly of certain women "opulent in flabby teats, more pendant than those of a cow suckling her calf." Brantôme adds pleasantly that, if some goldsmith were to take a model of these *grandes tetasses* to make of them two golden cups, these cups would resemble "true troughs, like the round wooden ones in which they feed hogs."

It was not only the preachers and confessors who condemned these nudities; philosophers and moralists also counselled women not to lose one of their natural advantages by leaving nothing to be desired by the eyes. "Satiety engenders disgust," remarked Montaigne (*Essais*, Book II, Chapter XV); "it is a soft, doltish, tired and sleepy passion." Then, as though he had not seen those objects which fashion brazenly exposed to all eyes, Montaigne goes on to imagine that the ladies of the court of Henri III were still clad as simply and as decently as the Roman maidens: "Why," he inquires, in his naïve preoccupation, "why do they veil down to the ankles those beauties which each one desires to show, which everyone desires to see? Why do they cover with so many concealments, one upon another, those parts where chiefly lodges our desire of them?" Montaigne, who had not noticed this perpetual display (*monstre*) of the naked bosom among his contemporaries, had, however, perceived the monstrous proportions of the *vertugales*, the result of a coquetry of a wholly different sort; for the essayist inquires, with malicious good humor: "Of what use are

those gross bastions with which our ladies have come to fortify their flanks, except to lure our appetite with difficulty, by drawing us to them even while they keep us at a distance?" One is tempted to believe that modesty at that time consisted less in hiding certain parts of the body than in exaggerating the form under veils which set the form off all the better. Prostitution, it is true, had its part in all the curiosities of fashion, and, as Brantôme has the audacity to prove by anecdotes in a chapter entitled *De la Veüe en Amour*, the eyes were always the corrupters of the soul and the accomplices of the imagination. Habit, however, had undoubtedly diminished the indecency of these nudities, which did not offend the gaze of the gravest men, when they formed an indispensable accessory to the ceremonious toilet of the court. Thus we see, at the Château de Chanonceux, Catherine de Medici giving a feast served by half-clad maids of honor. The memoirs of the time acquaint us with a multitude of analogous circumstances; nothing was more common than to see, in the ballets, at the masquerades, and at the banquets, women figuring as nymphs and goddesses, their disheveled hair floating down over their shoulders, their breasts uncovered to the girdle, their legs and thighs nude, the rest of the body being well marked under a supple or transparent material. Similar cases might be found in connection with the solemn entries (*entrées*) of the kings and queens of old (for in those days, the people were not indignant at beholding upon the scaffolds erected in the streets and on the street-corners of Paris, certain "mysteries," or allegorical tableaux, performed by men and women entirely naked); and so, it would seem that nudity was not looked upon as an outrage to modesty, when disengaged from all indecent ideas and freed from all carnal concupiscence. Gabrielle d'Estrées had herself painted a number of times "after nature" by the painters in ordinary to the King, Raymond Dubreuil and Martin Freminet, in the simple attire of a bather, emerging from or entering the bath; but what took away from these naïve pictures any suspicion of a profligate or even voluptuous thought, was the fact that the mistress of Henri IV, in having herself painted wholly nude, never neglected to have placed at the bottom of the canvas her children's nurses and their cradles.

Nudity of the throat was, then, at this period, merely an indispensable attribute of the costume, and no one, except the ecclesiastics and the Protestants, thought any wrong of it. The majority of the fine portraits in three colors which Dumoustier and his imitators executed

at the end of the 16th century indicate the prevalence of this mode, which attained from then on its climax; for the robes, at least those for gala occasions, were open in such a manner as to reveal half the breast, and sometimes the shoulders and the upper arms as far as the armpits, with a view of the back down to the shoulder blades. Court etiquette authorized this forgetfulness of all modesty, which public morality and religion at once condemned, without being able to effect a reform which would seem to have been so much in the interest of morals. The women who went to church to listen to a sermon against dissolute habits did not fear to sit with uncovered bosom under the eyes of the preacher. They attributed to the rigorism of the Huguenots the continual warfare which the Church made on these pomps of Satan and the vanities of the world. It was, as a matter of fact, Geneva which began pursuing with anathemas these indecent fashions. In the year 1551, a friend of Calvin's published, without attaching his name, a *Chrestienne instruction touchant la pompe et excez des hommes desbordéz et femmes dissolues, en la curiosité de leurs parures et attiffements d'habits*.* This work had been, a few years later, revised for the special use of Calvinists, under the title: *Traité de l'Estat Honneste des Chrestiens en Leur Accustrement*** (Geneva, Jean de Laon, 1580, in-8), and for the use of Catholics by Jérôme de Chastillon, under the following title: *Bref et Utile Discours sur l'Immodestie et Superfluité des Habits**** (Lyons, Seb. Gryphius, 1577, in-quarto). The Catholic casuists concerned themselves preferably with reprimanding luxury from the point of view of pride; the heterodox were more preoccupied with chastity and decency, when they attacked the "dissoluteness" of habits. We must, therefore, recognize a good and austere Protestant in François Estienne, who caused to be printed at Paris, in 1581, a small treatise on morality entitled *Remonstrance Charitable aux Dames et Damoiselles de France, sur Leurs Ornaments Dissolus, pour les Induire a Laisser l'Habit du Paganisme et Prendre Celui de la Femme Pudique et Chrestienne*****. But the Catholic theologians became piqued, and

*Translator's Note:—"Christian Instruction concerning the pomp and excesses of unbridled men and dissolute women, with regard to their curious (unnatural) adornments and the costumes in which they rig themselves out."

**Translator's Note:—"Treatise on the Attitude of Respectable Christians in the Matter of Their Attire."

***Translator's Note:—"Brief and Practical Discourse on Immodesty and Superfluity of Vestments."

****Translator's Note:—"Charitable Remonstrance to the Ladies and Young Ladies of France, on Their Dissolute Ornaments, by Way of Inducing Them to Lay Aside the Habit of Paganism and Take That of the Modest Christian Woman."

proceeded to leave nothing to the Protestants in the way of denouncing to the contempt of the pious those frightful nudities which Père Jacques Olivier did not forget in his *Alphabet de l'Imperfection et Malice des Femmes* (Paris, 1623, 12 mo.). This crusade of the ecclesiastical writers against the nudity continued without interruption throughout the whole of the 17th century, and we may indicate, as one of the most disputed results of this crusade, the imprisonment of a part of the bosom and shoulders in the corsage of the robe. We should not lose sight of the fact that the implacable enemies of immodest apparel had here attacked a delicate point of their controversy. Polman is the first to break the ice, in publishing *Le Chancre ou Couvresein Féminin** (Douai, 1635, in-8); after him, Pierre Juvernay touched again on the question in his *Discours Particulier sur les Femmes des Braillées de ce Temps*** (Paris, Lemur, 1637, in-8). This discourse met with success, without anyone's being able to say to what species of reader it owed this success; but in 1640, the fourth edition appeared with this new title: *Discours Particulier Contre les Filles et les Femmes Decouvrant Leur Sein et Portant des Moustaches****. All had not been said upon this subject, since an anonymous writer, in whom there has been an attempt to recognize the Abbé Jacques Boileau, doctor at the Sorbonne and brother of the great satirist, finally published the masterpiece in this line: *Le l'Abus des Nudités de la Gorge***** (Brussels, 1675, 12 mo.). The second edition (Paris, 1677, 12 mo.) is augmented with the *Ordonnance des Vicaires Généraux de Toulouse Contre la Nudité des Bras, des Epaules et de la Gorge******. The Marquis of Roure has given, in his *Analecta-Biblion*, a curious analysis of this celebrated treatise, in which the author examines, in the course of 113 paragraphs, the "nuisance and culpability" (*nuisance et culpabilité*) of nudity of the shoulders and of the throat: "Do not the women know," inquires the Marquis de Roure in his analysis, "that the sight of a beautiful bosom is not less dangerous to us than that of a cockatrice?—When one displays such things, it can only be with an evil design.—

**Translator's Note*:—"The Canker, or Feminine Bosom-Coverer."

***Translator's Note*:—Might be rendered as: "Special Sermon on Latter-Day Strumpets."

****Translator's Note*:—"Special Sermon against Women and Girls Who Uncover Their Bosom and Wear Mustaches."

*****Translator's Note*:—"The Abuse of Throat-Nudities."

******Translator's Note*:—"Ordinance of the Vicars-General of Toulouse against Nudity of the Arms, the Shoulders and the Throat."

If the women and girls cared to remember what St. John Chrysostom says, they would cover themselves.—Do they wish to be pleasing to libertines? But they merely become the latter's victims. Do they wish to please honest folk? But then they would cover themselves.—Woman is a temple to which purity holds the keys.—That her discourse should be chaste and her adornment should not be, what an inconsistency.—A nude bosom and shoulders speak more loudly than any discourse.—God compares the corrupt nation to the woman who elevates her bosom in order to show Him more grace.—Cover yourselves then, but wholly, and do not cover this to uncover that."

This polemist of the Sorbonne ended by drawing the court of Rome into the controversy, and by deciding Pope Innocent XI to launch a bull of excommunication against the abuse of throat-nudity; but at this period, the Church was no longer, as in the 16th century, interested in such questions. It is easy to understand, then, how the licentious modes of this century, so inveighed against by Protestant writers, should have practically escaped the censure of the Catholic theologians, who did not descend to these petty details of mundane life, but who entrenched themselves rather in the cloudy spheres of dogma; but moralists there were who posed as defenders of public decency, and who showed no grace to the shameful excesses (*déborderment*) of costume. The venerable Jean des Caures, principal of the college of Amiens, that singular prototype of Michel de Montaigne, frequently refers to the indecency of costume among his contemporaries, in the voluminous collection of his *Oeuvres Morales et Diversifiées en Histoires* (Second edition, Paris, G. de la Noue, 1584, in-8, 1,396 pages). Sometimes he is to be heard exclaiming: "The disguise is so gratuitously complete that today one takes the woman for the man and the man for the woman, there being no difference in costume!" At other times, he blames the mirrors which the "masked demoiselles and courtezans" (*courtisanes et damoiselles masquées*) wear at their girdles, and which he calls "mirrors of blemish hanging down over the belly" (*mirouers de macule pendans sur le ventre*); "And it was pleasing to the goodness of God that it should be permitted to all persons to call those who wear them lecheresses and whores (*paillardes et putains*), in order to correct them! . . . Let anyone read all the sacred as well as human and profane histories, and he will not find that the immodest ones and the prostitutes have ever worn them in public before, down to this day which the Devil has let loose on France!"

The honest Jean des Caurres frequently recurs to this usurpation of sexual costume and to the disguise of the sex by means of the habit; he becomes indignant, for example, at seeing "girls and women wearing robes and cloaks after the fashion of the man, which is a habit very unseemly for the said girls and women, and one forbidden by God in Deuteronomy, where he says: *Non induetur mulier veste virili, nec vir utetur veste femineâ; abominabilis enim apud Deum est.*"* But Henri III's courtiers, in imitation of the King and his male companions, had carried still further than the women this shameful masquerade, in which they sought to preserve nothing of the characteristics or attributes of their sex. We shall have more to say of this in the chapter which we are forced to devote to the coterie of *hermaphrodites*.

Brantôme, who was not a moralist, although he was an abbot like Jean de Caurres, also makes us acquainted with some of the fashionable excesses of his time; but he cites these excesses and expands upon them with an indulgence which reflects the looseness of his own morals. He reports, without being moved, without becoming indignant, the strangest evidences of courtly depravity. We renounce, for example, all attempt to translate in a bearable manner what he has to say of the *coussinets* and their employment in love; nor shall we endeavor to expose, even with as much reserve as possible, his scandalous theories on the drawers which women wore, and his strange revelations concerning the arcana of the gallant toilet. We have desired, however, to indicate, as one of the stigmata of the Prostitution of this century, the incredible attire which debauched women had invented in honor of their lovers; but the reader will do well to seek, in the *Dames Galantes* of Brantôme, in the chapter *de la Vêue en Amour*, the details of that secret mode which the women of the court had not disdained to borrow from the professional courtezans. Brantôme had heard tell of a "beautiful and honest lady" who did not blush to make use of such means, and who boasted that she was thus more "pleasing" in the eyes of her husband. The tragic death of Madame de la Bourdaisière revealed an indecency of this sort and created a scandal which echoed throughout France. All the contemporary memoirs report the fact, which may be looked upon as a characteristic episode in the history of this corrupt period. Pierre de l'Estoile does not fail to record it in his

**Translator's Note*:—That is, "Let not the woman put on the garments of the man, nor the man make use of the garments of the woman, for this is an abomination in the sight of God."

Registres-Journaux. It is to be found likewise reported in the observations which the editor of the *Journal de Henri III* (edition of 1744) had printed after the *Amours du Grand Alcandre*, while informing us that these observations "came from a person (feminine) who knew intimately the court of King Henri IV."

Brantôme makes us acquainted also with one of the most ingenious refinements of Prostitution at the court of the Valois. "A great Prince whom I know," he says, in the second discourse of his *Dames Galantes*, "caused his courtiers or ladies to sleep in bed-coverings of black taffeta well stretched. . . ." Brantôme might have added that this invention, attributed to the beautiful Imperia* and frequently put into practice by the great Italian courtezans, had been introduced into France by Queen Marguerite, first wife of Henri IV. The author of the *Divorce Satyrique* relates, in this factum, written in the name of the King, that this immodest adulteress "continuing her stubborn inclinations to voluptuousness and wishing to obtain in it more delights," received her lover, the Seigneur de Champvalon, "in a bed lighted with divers torches, between two sheets of black taffeta, accompanied by so many other little pleasures that I grow tired in telling of them."

The beds of the sixteenth century were sometimes as large as from seven to eight feet, for in certain circumstances, etiquette, politeness, or friendship would demand that a gentleman offer a place in his bed to another, in order to do the latter honor or to bear witness to him of a fraternal confidence. This was an old usage of Chivalry, the sharing of the bed being equivalent to all the vows of the ancient fraternity in arms. An account cited by Mayer informs us that, on the night preceding the battle of Montcontour, "M. de Guise shared his bed with M. le Prince (of Conde) and they slept together." The author of the *Galerie Philosophique du Seizième Siècle* (Paris, 1783, in 8, 3 volumes) adds: "The custom of offering one's bed did not go out of fashion until the minority of Louis XIV. Louis XIII had shared his bed with the Constable of Luynes; the Constable slept in the middle, the King at his right, the Duchess at his left." This singular custom, which appears to have been preserved among the small bourgeoisie down to the time of the Revolution, and which indicates merely a certain simplicity of manners, was not always so respectable. It is difficult, for example, not to entertain a doubt and a suspicion, when

*Translator's Note:—See the *Contes Drolatiques*. (J. U. N.)

we learn, from a licentious tradition of the time of Louis XIV, that Scarron's charming widow, who was later to become the severe and irreproachable Madame de Maintenon, frequently shared the bed of her friend, the beautiful Ninon de Lenclos. However this may be, having become a favorite of the King, and almost Queen of France, she frequently remembered with a sigh, the light and intimate conversations of the "yellow chamber" of the quartier Saint-Paul.

At a period of general demoralization such as that which we find in France under Henri III, everything was or might become a pretext or an occasion for scandal. The most audacious Prostitution had found its way into public as into private life. The King, who himself set an example of vice, and who paraded his own shameful depravity, futilely published edicts against luxurious costumes; the sumptuary ordinances of his predecessors were "so ill observed, that there has never been seen in the memory of man," the King says, in his edict of the 24th of March, 1583, "such a licentious excess in the said costumes and other adornments as there is at present." But what motivated the ordinances that followed was less the indecency of attire than the immoderate employment of silken stuffs, gold and silver embroideries, jewels and all the products of the foreigner's art; the concern of the nobility, whom these ordinances were designed particularly to interest, was less to see a disappearance of immodest modes than it was to force the rich who did not belong to the nobility to submit to a tyrannical regulation in the price, material and form of their vestments. Henri III said, in issuing his great edict of 1583, that his subjects were "destroying" and impoverishing themselves "by the dissoluteness and superfluity which is in their habiliments, and, what is worse, and what gives us more displeasure, God is greatly offended thereby, and modesty has become almost wholly extinguished;" but he did not think of including in the articles of the ordinance a single repressive provision directed against downright immodesty of costume. He interdicts with a minute care "bands of embroidery, quiltings (*piqueures*) or tippings (*emboutissemens*), laces (*passemens*), fringes, tufts, *tortils* or *canetilles*, borders or bands, of any sort whatever, *chesnettes* and *arrière-poincts* on any species of vestment;" he enumerates with the same severity the notable differences which the condition of the person may authorize in the richness of accoutrement; he forbids women à *chapron de drap* to wear more than one chain of gold at the throat or more than one row (*rangée*) of buttons, hooks, aglets or knots, on the

body or vents of their robes; but he does not seek to remedy the "abominations and disguises" of the mode, as the genial Jean des Caures described them at the time, in supplicating the magistrates and public officers to look after this scandalous relaxation of manners.

Already, in 1576, Henri III had endeavored to restore to vigor the sumptuary edicts of Charles IX; he had had them read and published "to the sound of the trumpet and by public cry" through the streets of Paris and in other cities of the realm. A fine of a thousand crowns in gold was to imposed on any person, man or woman, who should be found in violation of the law, that is to say, clad in such vestments as his social condition did not permit him to wear. But while the King thought it necessary to renew the "holy" ordinances of his ancestors against the excesses of luxury, "with prohibitions to persons not noble to usurp the habits of gentlemen and to make of their women demoiselles," he paid no attention to the incredible indecency of feminine costume. Parliament, which was then closing the Italian theater of the Gelosi, for the reason that "all those comedies teach nothing but lecheries and adulteries, and serve only as a school of debauchery to the youth of both sexes of the city of Paris," did not dare to arrest or reform the "*mode qui court*." "The disorder," wrote Pierre de l'Estoile, under date of the 26th of June, 1577, in announcing the expulsion of the Gelosi, "the disorder was great enough without such preceptors, principally among the ladies and demoiselles, who appeared to have learned the manners of the soldiers of that time, who made a show of their cuirasses gilded and shining upon parade; for the ladies likewise made a parade of their bosoms and open breasts and other pectoral parts, which are endowed with a perpetual movement, which movement these ladies produce by compass or by measure, like a clock, or, to speak more properly, like the bellows of the blacksmiths when they light the fire in the forge." (See the *Journal de Henri III*, in the excellent edition of MM. Champollion.)

The sumptuary court ordinances, which were so numerous during the seventeenth century never attacked anything but luxury and never regulated anything but the cost of costumes and the quality of materials, in accordance with the conditions of the wearers; they were not concerned with the indecent caprices of fashion, and they remained indifferent to the scandalous abuses of nudity. But religion on the one hand and morality on the other made up for the silence of the laws on the subject of costume. They aided, one and the other, the progress of

public decency, and the good women, who were ashamed of being like courtezans in their attire, took it upon themselves, better than kings and parliaments with their edicts could have caused them to do, to submit fashion to the laws of modesty and decency. And yet, as Joly remarks, in his *Avis Chrétiens pour l'Institution des Enfants*, "one of the most difficult things with these girls is to deprive them of the desire for curious habits and ornaments of the body. The reason for this is that women naturally love to be adorned." The *débordement* had gone so far in the matter of habits and adornment that the very excess of the evil produced a happy and salutary reaction; until each came to desire that her manner of clothing herself should not be an unfortunate index of her manners, while no one, except those of evil life, sought any longer to be distinguished by the exterior characteristics of debauchery and impudicity. Seemliness gradually resumed its sway in the domain of fashion, and the ladies and damsels, while reserving the right to go with bare throats and shoulders at gala affairs and balls, no longer showed themselves, in the sixteenth century, clad in the immodest livery of Prostitution.

CHAPTER LXXIV

WE POSSESS a very curious document regarding the state of Prostitution at the end of the 16th century. It is the work entitled *Le Cabinet du Roy de France, dans Lequel il y a Trois Perles Précieuses d'Inestimable Valeur, par le Moyen Desquelles Sa Majesté s'en Va le Premier Monarque du Minde et Ses Sujets du Tout Soulagéz*.^{*} This rare work, of which there exists but a single edition, constitutes an octavo volume of 647 pages, with eight flyleaves and five unnumbered contents pages; it bears the name neither of the place of publication nor of the publisher; it is dated 1581 from the title page; and the dedicatory epistle to Henri III, in which the author hides behind the initials N. D. C., ends with the date of the first of November, 1581. The bibliographers have merely cited this book, without deigning to concern themselves with its contents, and we are left unaware that the *Mélanges Tirés d'Une Grande Bibliothèque* (Vol. XVII, pages 362 and following), where we find a species of very succinct and very imperfect analysis of this singular publication, comes in reality from the secret headquarters of the reformers. It is sufficient to examine this volume and to compare its mode of printing with that of books printed about the same time at La Rochelle in order to be certain that it was manufactured in one of the typographical shops of that city, which was then the capitol of *Huguenoterie*. As to the author of the *Cabinet du Roy de France*, the learned La Monnoye, in his remarks on the *Auteurs Déguisés* of Baillet, would have it that he was Nicolas Barnaud, to whom he also attributed the *Miroir des François, contenant l'estat et le maniement des affaires de France*, published under the pseudonym of Nicolas de Montand; but there is nothing to authorize or justify this supposition, which La Monnoye does not take the pains to support with even a few proofs or a few plausible reasons. The opinion set forth by the commentator of Baillet has, nevertheless, been accepted as an accredited fact by bibliographers. An attempt has even been made to explain the initials of the unknown author as those of Nicolas de Crest, this weird conjecture being based upon the fact that Nicolas Barnaud was born at Crest in Dauphiny!

^{*}*Translator's Note*.—"The Cabinet of the King of France, in Which There Are Three Precious Pearls of Inestimable Value, by Means of Which His Majesty is Seen to Be the World's First Monarch, While His Subjects Are Thereby Freed From All Care."

But the name of the author makes little difference to us, and we shall not enter into extended details in an attempt to prove that Nicolas Barnaud, physician, theologian, Socinian, and, above all, an indefatigable seeker of the philosophers' stone, would never have been able to assemble the enormous statistical material which serves to make up the *Cabinet du Roy de France*. It is sufficient to point out, from a letter of this Barnaud, written at Leyden, in 1599, that he had traveled in Spain for more than forty years before going to take up his residence in Holland (see the letter prefacing his work on alchemy, entitled: *Quadriga aurifera, nunc primum a Nicolao Bernaudo* (sic), *Delphinatæ, in lucem edita*. (Lugd. Batav., ap. Christ. Raphelengium, 1599, in-8). We are inclined rather to attribute the *Cabinet* to Nicolas Froumenteau, whose name figures on the title page of a work of the same sort, published the same year: *le Secret des finances de France, decouvert et departi en trois livres et maintenant publié pour ouvrir les moyens légitimes et nécessaires de purger les dettes du roy, decharger les sujets des subsides imposés depuis trente-un ans et recouvrer tous les deniers pris à Sa Majesté*.^{*} A first edition, a good deal less complete than this, which forms three octavo volumes, had appeared in 1581 with these titular variations: *Le Secret des trésors de la France, decouvert et departy en deux livres*.^{**} The printer, in a note which appears on the reverse of the title-page, states that this work had been awaited with so lively an impatience that the sheets were snatched from the press while still damp. This circumstance is sufficient to indicate that the printing was done in a Protestant city, where it did not have to be done in secret. The *Secret des Finances*, as a matter of fact, would appear to have been printed, like the *Cabinet du Roy de France*, at La Rochelle, and it is very probable that this latter anonymous work, published after the former, which is also dedicated to Henri III and dated from Paris the 1st of January, 1581, is from the hand of this same Nicolas Froumenteau, whose name is not to be found in any other book. It remains to determine whether *Froumenteau* is not a pseudonym, hiding one of those terrible champions of the time, either Agrippa d'Aubigné, Plessis-Mornay, Lancelot Voessin de la Pope-

^{*}*Translator's Note*:—"The Secret of the finances of France, laid bare and set forth in three books and now published in order to provide the legitimate and necessary means of paying off the King's debts, relieving his subjects of the subsidies imposed for the past thirty-one years, and recovering all the revenues due His Majesty.

^{**}*Translator's Note*:—"The Secret of the treasures of France, laid bare and set forth in two books."

linière, or, finally, the furious minister of reform, Guillaume Reboul, who was the author of a number of books equally violent and not less eccentric. But we are not here concerned with the *Secret des Finances*, although it might furnish many curious details for a history of Prostitution, such, for example, as the "number of girls and women violated" during the civil wars. The *Cabinet du Roy de France* is sufficiently replete with information to make it unnecessary for us to look elsewhere for material relative to the same subject in the same period.

First for a summary analysis of the book. The three precious pearls which the author proposes to examine are the Word of God, the Nobility and the Third Estate, which he shows us as being enclosed in a sheath (*étui*) or casket (*écrin*), which is none other than the realm of France. He first makes an enumeration of the goods and revenue of the clergy; he would have the King take possession of these and make them a part of his domain, in order to be able, with the aid of these new resources, to support armies, succor the poor, bring prosperity to agriculture, and put an end to those disorders which were dishonoring the Catholic Church. He goes on to point out the vices and bad deportment of the Nobility; and he indicates the reforms which might reestablish the Nobility in its former splendor. Finally, he speaks of the Third Estate with a very special predilection; according to the plan of finances which he has conceived, the Third Estate should become the steward of the property of the nobles and ecclesiastics, and then should take upon itself the task of paying the debts of the nation, filling the coffers of the King and providing dowries suitable for marrying off all the priests and nuns. After this simple exposition of the principal ideas of the author, who was evidently an unrelenting Huguenot, one might with reason ask what interest such a work could have for a history of Prostitution, but all one has to do is to open this *Cabinet du Roy de France* in order to form an idea of the interesting documents it contains of this subject, although we shall not take literally all the accusations which the author makes against the manners of the clergy and the nobility of his time. It would appear that this author had collected, under the title of *Traité de la Polygamie Sacrée*,* an immense quantity of notes and statistical material, with the object of establishing by means of figures the true state of demoralization in the Catholic Church; this treatise would have filled not less than three thousand scrolls, and it would have formed

*Translator's Note:—"Treatise on Sacred Polygamy."

more than three folio volumes, if it ever had been printed; but we may presume that it was never printed, although a number of bibliographers, notably Le Duchat, in his remarks on the *Confession de Sancy*, have cited it as a work which had seen the light of day. It is from this work that the author of the *Cabinet du Roy de France* has drawn what he has to say on the subjects of polygamy and Prostitution under the reign of Henri III.

Despite the exaggeration in his calculations, despite the brutality of the accompanying reflections, however monstrous his book may appear to be in some particulars, we are forced to recognize the fact that the Huguenot statistician is not here indulging merely in a work of the imagination, but that he had collected certain precise data. He affects an air of good faith and conviction in drawing up his inventions and systems; he is filled with a holy horror for polygamy or Prostitution, desiring to see not merely all the nuns married, but also all the husbands and all the women faithful to their mates! It is this fine zeal for marriage which incessantly inspires him, and which renders him the implacable foe of all celibates, adulterers and polygamists. "I maintain," he says in his dedication to the King, "that more than four times seven hundred thousand women commit polygamy or concubinage with those magicians and enchanters who for so long have kept hidden those pearls in your Cabinet." The magicians and enchanters are the bad priests, the false nobles and the debauchees of every sort. The author does not otherwise indicate that he is a Huguenot and that, under pretext of restoring order to French finances, he would replace "the papal Church," by the Reformation of Calvin, which he refers to as "the true word of God." But the statistics which he pretends to have drawn from the best sources regarding the moral state of the clergy are none the less precious, even when mingled with those which are slanderous and exaggerated. We know, from the statements of Catholic writers themselves, that the clergy at this period of general disorder, did not lead any more edifying a life than did the laity.

The author of the *Cabinet du Roy de France*, after having stated as a fact that the total revenue of the clergy amounts to two hundred million crowns, which, at the current rate of silver, would represent nearly two billion, endeavors to demonstrate that this enormous revenue is devoured by Prostitution; for, according to him, there are nearly five million persons "who, under the veil of the Gallican

Church, live at the expense of the Crucifix." He believes that he can establish the exactness of his calculations by selecting as a criterion one of the archbishoprics of France, that of Lyons, and by enumerating all that goes to make up the personnel of sacred polygamy in this archbishopric. Without entering into all the details of these frightful statistics, and before presenting them in tabular form in the manner of those which Parent-Duchâtelet has laboriously drawn up in his work, *De la Prostitution*, we believe that a few outstanding features will be sufficient to give us an idea of the author's statistical method.

"There will be found," he says, (page 19), "in the dioceses of the said archbishopric (of Lyons) more than 45 women married to honorable men of all conditions, who have been abused by and who commit lechery with the said prelates. Notwithstanding such adulteries, the said prelates have held and continue to hold a fine assortment of girls and lasses, who have given them children a-plenty, all of whom engender and every day produce other children; but here we are concerned only with those bastards who have sprung from that episcopal primacy during the year of this Census, who are in number twenty-seven. There will also be found in the list forty-two debauched girls." The author announces that the "episcopal waifs" (*épaves épiscopales*) are not mentioned in this list. He means by that "those girls who are accustomed to refresh Messieurs the prelates when they make their journey, that is to say, upon the visitation of their dioceses." As to the servants and domestics of the prelates, they follow in the footsteps of their masters: "In the list which we have here drawn up," remarks the author with mathematical calm, "are specified 65 women married to notable citizens who have committed lechery with the aforesaid. By means of such lecheries, sodomies and adulteries, the bellies of 160 girls have been filled, eighty of whom have each had a bastard during the year of the present Census." Following the secretaries and the chaplains, including 242 persons, among whom the author includes the stewards, the musicians, the butlers, the huntsmen, etc., but not the pages and lackeys: "Of this said number, the list includes 53 sodomites, without including the pages and lackeys, who are, as it were, constrained to acquiesce in the desires of these monsters. Three hundred married women, and all named in the list, are found to have committed lechery with these domestics, who, beside these women, kept 500 lasses, 300 of whom have each produced a bastard during the

year of the present State. According as it is written in the *Traité de la Polygamie* there have been but 48 procuresses discovered; the others are so secret that one cannot even recognize them, much less have their names and nicknames." This passage shows us that the census of the agents of polygamy was customarily taken by means of the names and nicknames of the persons involved.

The suffragans, official vicars and others, formed a personnel of 245 persons: the list in the *Polygamie Sacrée* gives them 58 bourgeois women married and of honorable families, 19 sodomites, 39 aged ex-chambermaids, 17 procuresses, 20 chambermaids and others, "121 of whom have each had bastards during the year of this present Census." The canons, to the number of 478, were not, if we are to believe this statistician, any more reserved in their conduct. He excuses himself for not having been able to discover more than 600 married women "lecherer canonically;" but he indicates in the terrible list a canon "who, in one year, has debauched and had affairs with nine bourgeois women, namely, two wives of advocates, one wife of a procurator, three drapers' wives, the wife of a money-changer, a procuress and a female haberdasher." He lists, in the chapter on canons, 68 sodomites, 846 young girls and chambermaids, "kept by bed and board" (*tenues à pot et à feu*), etc., of whom "the majority had lost the fruit which they bore," and 62 procuresses, designated by their names and nicknames. "In addition to the aforesaid canons," adds the inflexible calculator, "you have 96, the third part of whom are all syphilitic and gouty; the others are sexagenarians who have chambermaids, all of whose teeth are falling out of their mouths, as much on account of the syphilis as of old age, and who no longer make any children." The canons, having in their service 900 valets, these valets who are "fresh, fat and full" (*frais, gras et replets*), keep 1400 girls and commit lechery with 150 married women. The chaplains, to the number of 300, "multiply greatly in bastards," and the list attributes to each of them two or three lecheresses (*paillardes*) married or unmarried; the societarians (*sociétaires*) are still more debauched; one of them is cited "who has lechered in one year with 28 women." Their valets excelled them in continence, for, while they numbered 215, their polygamous record includes 168 girls, who have produced 118 bastards in the year of the census. The clerks or *coriaux* (there were then 317 in the archbishopric of Lyons), all young and gay, cared less for girls than for married women; 200 of these latter are registered as having shared the

debauches of these *garçonnetts* but it may be presumed that not all of them were known.

Suppose we stop in this prodigious nomenclature and leave to one side all that which this implacable enemy of Prostitution has to tell us concerning the deportment of the nuns and monks. It is sufficient, by means of actual quotations, to have indicated the sort of statistics which were so audaciously compiled in the *Polygamie Sacrée*. We now purpose to present in the form of a synoptic table, which the author himself has taken the care to draw up, a numerical and complete account of the unheard of disorders which existed in 1581, in the archbishopric of Lyons, an archbishopric chosen among all others as a scandalous specimen of the depravity of the clergy.

Detailed State of Sacred Polygamy in the Archbishopric or Primacy of Lyons in the Year 1581, according to the Researches and Calculations of the Author of the CABINET DU ROY DE FRANCE.

1. Number of archbishops, bishops, abbots and priors	480
2. Their gentlemen and servants	1,782
3. Abbatial officers	957
4. Their valets and servants	1,250
5. Canons	478
6. Their valets and servants	900
7. Curates or pastors	13,200
8. Their valets	6,700
9. Vicars of the said curates	13,200
10. Their valets	4,200
11. Societarians	849
12. Their valets	225
13. Companions of the order and officers of the cloister	800
14. Their valets	420
15. Monks	4,200
16. Their valets and lay assistants	800
17. Carthusians	150
18. Their valets	169
19. Gray Friars	700
20. Jacobins	600
21. Their valets	166
22. Carmelites	452

23. Their valets.....	180
24. Their lay assistants and valets.....	160
25. Jansenists or Anthonians.....	315
26. Minims, Celestines, etc.....	500
27. Jesuits and their servants.....	62
28. Knights and commanders (of the Order of Malta).....	692
29. Their servants.....	1,800
30. Nuns and religious.....	2,345
31. Their valets and guardian fathers.....	600
32. Novices and <i>enfants de chœur</i> , Episcopal as well as abbatial	2,800
33. Clerks or <i>coriaux estalons</i>	317

ADULTEROUS WOMEN

Episcopal.....	468
Canonical.....	750
Of the chaplains.....	160
Of the Societarians.....	600
Of the curates, etc.....	17,000
Of the vicars, etc.....	24,700
Of the monks.....	12,100
Of the members of the Order of Malta.....	12,120
Of the Franciscans.....	400
Of the Jacobins.....	200
Of the Carmelites.....	200
Of the Augustinians.....	130
Of the Carthusians.....	40
Of the Jesuits.....	5

LASSES (*Garces*) (OR UNMARRIED GIRLS)

Episcopal.....	900
Canonical.....	2,200
Of the chaplains.....	800
Of the Societarians.....	600
Of the pastors or curates.....	20,000
Of their vicars.....	30,000
Monkish or abbatial.....	22,000
Bastards of bastards.....	5,000
Hierosolomytes, that is to say, members of the Order of Malta	2,009

CHRISTIAN ERA

1233

Franciscan or gray nuns	400
Jacobins	1,278
Carmelites	410
Augustinians	378
Carthusians	166
Anthonians	800
Celestines, Minims, etc.	600
Jesuits	7
Of the Guardian fathers	600
Of the Clerks or <i>coriaux</i>	187

PROCURERS, MALE AND FEMALE

Episcopal	484
Canonical	62
Chaplains	45
Societarians	411
Curates	2,000
Vicars	3,000
Monkish and abbatial	2,400
Order of Malta	200
Franciscan	75
Jacobin	180
Carmelite	130
Augustinian	96
Carthusian	40
Jesuits	3
Celestine, etc.	24
Guardian fathers	38
Clerks or <i>coriaux</i>	59
Nuns	300

SODOMITES

Episcopal	124
Canonical	68
Chaplains	40
Societarian priests	112
Curates	200
Vicars	none

Abbots and priors, etc.....	411
Monks.....	1,100
Franciscans.....	160
Jacobins.....	108
Augustinians.....	60
Carthusians.....	50
Minims and Celestines.....	9
Jesuits.....	49

NOTE: We believe it would be useless to introduce into this table the census of *Bastards*, *Bastards of Bastards*, *Horses*, *Venery* and *Falconry*.

The author of these strange calculations, borrowed from the *Traité de la Polygamie Sacrée* (Book V, Chapters 9 and 10), does not reveal to us the manner in which he made his mysterious census, which he assures us is valid,* not only for the whole Gallican Church, but also for the whole of Christendom. There is one objection however which he will have to meet at once in the minds of his readers. "Who is there," they will say to him, "who could have discovered and counted, in such or such a primacy or archbishopric, such and such a number of ecclesiastics, whores, procuresses, and such and such a number of other persons described in the summary and census above given?" The response if it is specious is not very conclusive. The author states that it is no more difficult to make a census of sacred Polygamy than it would be to make a catalogue of the stars or an "inventory of the diabolic monarchy," which includes 72 princes and 7,405,926 devils, without counting the little ones. We will admit that these latter statistics are a bit more difficult than the other, "in view of the fact," as our author tells us, "that we associate, drink, and eat ordinarily with the accomplices of sacred polygamy." After having defended in this manner the authenticity of his inventory, the comptroller-general of sacred polygamy proceeds to indulge in a summary (*recueil*) by dioceses of the "prelates and benefice-holders, their domestics and other persons, male or female, who live at the expense of the Crucifix." This summary, to which we are far from according entire credence, deserves, nevertheless, to be preserved in view of the lack of more serious statements and information less vitiated by Calvinistic partial-

*Translator's Note:—The table bears internal evidence of falsity. Witness the excessive number of items of so-called "round figures." (J. U. N.)

ity. We have, accordingly, drawn up a table in the manner of Parent-Duchâtelet, in order to establish the balance-sheet of Prostitution, in each diocese, along with the income and outlay of the polygamists of the Gallican Church. (*See the accompanying Table.*)

General State of Sacred Polygamy, by Dioceses, in 1581, with the Income and Outlay, from the Researches and Calculations of the Author of the Cabinet Du Roy De France.

Primacies	Ecclesiastics, including all their officers and servants	Sacerdotal adulteresses	Girls of Evil Life	Bastards and Bastards of Bastards	Maque-reaux and Maque-relles	Sodomites	Receipts	Expenditures
Lyons.....	65,230	67,888	88,078	59,138	8,839	2,083	4,657,784	3,820,873
Rheims.....	66,740	88,500	63,700	9,700	9,700	2,600	4,988,788	3,807,684
Sens.....	66,712	68,852	96,200	60,500	11,000	1,800	4,987,998	4,100,020
Rouen.....	62,600	73,714	70,026	70,000	15,700	2,200	5,348,648	4,237,537
Beauvais.....	58,300	58,500	76,400	64,000	12,200	1,500	4,686,474	3,973,232
Tours.....	67,300	68,500	77,900	69,700	12,300	1,900	4,980,642	4,260,111
Bourges.....	62,400	75,200	111,500	67,300	14,700	2,000	5,776,144	4,993,321
Bordeaux.....	53,700	80,200	100,400	71,000	15,600	1,200	4,988,676	4,127,123
Toulouse.....	58,600	79,800	103,009	70,000	18,400	1,600	5,468,877	4,647,530
Narbonne.....	58,900	71,200	94,600	63,500	15,600	1,600	4,887,622	4,112,610
Aix or Arles.....	56,300	67,200	95,400	58,900	14,800	1,500	4,752,600	4,111,200
Vienne.....	55,000	62,200	58,900	57,400	12,000	1,600	3,875,666	3,214,443
Other dioceses not distinguished, to the number of 69, including those in the low country of Flanders.....	287,000	300,000	370,000	400,000	100,000	18,000	41,500,000	35,600,000

TOTAL

Total number of persons living at the expense of the Crucifix in the Gallican Church	5,155,102
Sum total of receipts.....	100,530,119 crowns
Sum total of expenses.....	84,596,089 crowns

The author of the *Cabinet du Roy de France* always sends his readers back to the *Traité de la Polygamie Sacrée*, from which he draws the material for his monstrous calculations; but he does not say that this treatise had been printed; we are unable, therefore, to grasp the circumstances which prevented it from appearing, or which caused copies of it to be destroyed. What proves to us the existence of this treatise, is the fact that the author, who cites it constantly, indicating the books and chapters from which he makes his borrowings, has no precise information concerning the polygamy of gentlemen, being able, on this point, merely to present a set of statistics analogous to those which he had found already in the general census of sacred polygamy. He devotes himself by preference, with a sort of malicious pleasure, to

the first part of his subject, and he comes back to it tirelessly throughout his work, which appears to have had no other end than to cause the royal confiscation of the goods of the clergy by compelling the ecclesiastics and all the religious, male as well as female (*tant masles que femelles*) to marry whether they wished to or not. The manner in which he sets about establishing the authenticity of his figures relative to the agents of Prostitution does not, it is true, impress us as being serious or authentic, and we recognize the fact that, in this process of insinuation and induction, the bad faith of the "crazy" (*enragés*) Huguenots, as they were then called, is to be described; nevertheless, these very calumnies, replete as they are with a venomous hatred, are not wholly to be disdained, inasmuch as they afford us a definite picture of the debauched life led by certain unworthy members of the Catholic clergy at this period.

Following, for example, is the manner in which the author justifies himself for having ascribed to each French cardinal a seraglio of six mistresses, without counting the married women in His Eminence's train: "But how to establish," he adds, "this figure, six? By the cardinals themselves; they are not so shameful, surely, as not to confess this. The most venerable of their number has, for more than a year, abused more than thirty. There is one cardinal who does nothing but 'stand,' in a manner of speaking, and who is one of the youngest, and who does no other thing but serve as a spare stallion (*estalon à rechange*). The first three months he wore the red hat, which were the days of his greatest continence, he also cardinalized two married women and three young damoiselles. How to prove that? By himself." Brantôme, in fact, who prides himself on being a very good Catholic, does not speak in any different terms of the "great" Cardinal of Lorraine, who "trained with his own hand" (*dressait de sa main*) the feminine newcomers at the court. The historian of the *Dames Galantes* can conceive nothing better to excuse his Eminence's incontinence than to say "that he was a man of flesh and blood, like any other" and that "the king willed it thus and took pleasure in it." The author of the *Cabinet du Roy* is then in agreement with Brantôme, when he arrives at this Rabelaisian conclusion, which recalls the style of the *Confession de Sancy*: "As many cardinals as there are at court, so many stallions are there for the ladies; as many horns as there are in their bonnets, so many cuckolds (*cornards*) do they make every week. What would you have them do? They do not know how

to preach; the majority of them do not know what a sermon is. Dispute in theology? The ladies are none too well brought up in that, nor the cardinals either. If when they are together they must speak of something, it is not of affairs of State, nor, still less, of finances. . . . Of what do they speak then? Of laughing and dancing. Why do they do that? To lecher. How would you prove that? By the fact that oftenest the belly of mademoiselle swells up and the belly of the cardinal's purse goes down; the merchants themselves, who sell them their cloth of gold, their silver and their silk, know well enough to whom such goods go and who it is has caused them to be purchased."

There is no cause for astonishment, if, after this shameful picture of cardinal's manners, we find the analyst of sacred polygamy depicting the cardinal's domestic servants as being tarred with the same brush. "The prelates and the cardinals," he says, availing himself of the proverb, "Like master, like servant" (*tels maîtres, tels valets*), "are lascivious as their valets are; the prelates are lecherers; the valets are the same; the latter are not cardinals but they conduct themselves like cardinals. In the recesses of the darkest brothel in France, you will not hear such villainous and filthy remarks as are to be heard in the house of a cardinal. I call to witness, upon this point, all those who keep the cardinals company. There, by day or night, you will hear nothing else than talk of 'fresh meat'; that is the name they give to the poor girls and women whom they debauch, and after they have done so, they mock them with open mouth, if their mouth does not happen to be syphilitic or chancrous." In the *Traité de la Polygamie Sacrée*, mention is made "of the lecherous manner in which the domestics of the cardinals take the place of courtezans (certain damsels who follow the court), even down to the muleteers, who, after having taken their pastime, see that the cardinals get what is left." It was particularly on the journeys of the cardinals or prelates, when they were visiting their archbishoprics or other holdings, that these domestics gave free reign to their unbridled profligacy; for they lodged, like their masters, in the houses of notable inhabitants in each of the cities in which they stopped to pass the night or for a sojourn, "and rarely do they leave their lodgings," relates the implacable reformer, "without having struck a blow at the honor of their host or hostess, and if they cannot arrive at their ends, they will arouse a greater than themselves in order to accomplish what they propose. If the daughter of the house is rich, marry her off to some pimp, or to Monsieur the secretary. If

she is already married, she is already lost; for at sight of all the corruption about her, it is impossible for her not to fall into polygamy."

It may be assumed, in short, that the numerous domestics which a prelate kept in his suite were not models of continence and morality, especially when we reflect on the sad results of bad example and bad counsel in a society of debauched and lazy individuals. The household of a cardinal was made up of more than a hundred persons; that of a bishop did not include less than from fifty to sixty, living out of the episcopal "saucepan" (*marmite*). Thus, every bishop who kept the state to which his rank entitled him had in his service one or two chaplains, a *mâitre d'hôtel*, a squire, a physician, three prothonotaries, three or four gentlemen, four or five pages, one or two secretaries, one or two valets de chambre, a steward, a cook, a butler, two or three choristers, two or three musicians, a tailor, an apothecary, a vivandier, eight servants, "as many prothonotaries as *maistres d'hostel*, squires and gentlemen," a falconer, a huntsman, three or four lackeys, an "arquebusier to accompany him in the chase and who had the conduct of a setter (*chaïen chouchant*)," a hostler with two stableboys, a muleteer with a servant, and a wagoner. This curious enumeration, verified by the author "by more than fifty-six bishops," does not include the coachman nor the *garçons* or secretary's lackies, the steward, the butler and others. All these men, the majority of them young, and ordinarily vowed to celibacy, possessed the most depraved manners, whatever may have been the sanctity of the prelate to whose house they were attached. It is easy to understand how they might, in many circumstances, cause to be reflected upon their respectable patron the shame of their own disorderly conduct, and, in this chapter at least, the author of the *Cabinet du Roy de France* has, perhaps, not too greatly inflated the figures which have to do with Prostitution in the houses of prelates; "Monsieur the Bishop is a man," he remarks in Huguenot fashion, "and monsieur his valet is not a horse. They do not want them to marry, and so they must find their pleasures in the commonalty."

One scandalous adventure, related with much verve by the author, who presents it as an intimate picture of the episcopacy, and who asserts that he knew personally the heroine, will give us an idea of what the manners of a prince of the Church were sometimes like in this age of dissoluteness and general license. "For an after-supper recreation," says the narrator (page 79), "there was found a woman of

honor, who, for pleasure, accompanied by twenty-three women, nine girls and eight servants, went to present *un mommon* (that is to say, they masked themselves for a dice party) to Monsieur the Bishop, in his lodgings, who undoubtedly was awaiting them, without this respectable woman suspecting any other thing for, otherwise, I think so well of her that I know she would not have gone. The Bishop lost three crowns. To console himself for his loss, he caused the violins to be played and they danced in such a manner that there was not a woman, nor any girl nor servant-maid, who did not take part. This was done by the Bishop, two prothonotaries, the secretary, and seven or eight canons who had been attracted to the party. As to the valets, each of them fared for himself. In brief, from eight o'clock to midnight the ball continued, and there were many marvels from the comfitures to the collation. This respectable woman was taken by surprise, without thinking, for a villainous procuress having caused her to enter Monsieur's study, pretending that other women were there, she found there a prothonotary who seized her and did with her, as is to be presumed, that which seemed good to him; because the good woman, leaving the place, hurled a thousand insults at that procuress, swearing that she would cause her to repent of what she had done; and at the same instant, with tears in her eyes, she left that venerable company, which was, to tell the truth, exceedingly well "bishoped" (*maquignonnée*).^{*} The Bishop, for his pleasure, went so far as to summon his palfreys; and bantering with them, they confessed freely what they had done in that *danse macabre*, and provoked Monsieur the Bishop to laughter." One might fancy he was reading a chapter of the *Moyen de Parvenir* of Beroalde de Verville; the author adds that the husband of this woman, who complained of having been the victim of a cowardly ambushade, had sworn vengeance on the Bishop and turned Huguenot. It is possible, on the other hand, that the Bishop was in no wise an accomplice in an act of violence committed by one of his servants, and that there was no other reproach which might have been made against him than the fact that he loved the dance and good stories a trifle too well; but he was, nevertheless, responsible for the disorderly conduct of the inmates of his house.

The *Traité de la Polygamie Sacrée* indicates the same disorderly conduct on the part of the servants of the canons, officials, deans,

^{*}*Translator's Note:*—In the sense of *bishoping* a horse (for sale); *maquignonner* is to jockey, to "bishop," etc.

choristers and other ecclesiastical dignitaries, those of the abbots and the priors, and those of the monks of all the religious or military orders. These valets "are so well treated," says the author of the *Cabinet du Roy de France*, "that from their faces, at first glance, one can tell that they are the servants of canons and of monks, so fat are they and so well fed (*en bon point*), and so little trouble do they have in overcoming the lasses; for those girls kept by their masters most often have others in their train, and when they do not have such, the lads know well where to find others. These girls are so expert in their trade in and about the cloisters, that, passing by there, you smell the venison à pleine gorge; that is to say, they practice their trade of lechery very well." It is certain that this multitude of male domestics, well fed and often idle, only too greatly favored the progress of open and covert Prostitution, especially after legal Prostitution had been suppressed by the ordinance of Charles IX. "There is not a daughter of poor artisans, hodmen, *day-laborers* or others with whom these villains do not batter the breech, and most often, for a loaf of white bread, they deflower a poor girl; if she is beautiful, she goes to monsieur the canon; is she is middling beautiful, and the master does not want her, the valet knows well enough where to find a substitute for her. . . . And as a matter of fact, there is not a father nor a mother, upon casting a look upon such vermin, who ought not to tremble for the peril and extreme danger of their poor daughters and servant-maids; for as many valets of this sort as you see, so many evil bulls are there among the heifers and the cows in the midst of a prairie." The valets of the abbots possessed certain privileges which caused them to be envied by the canons' valets: "There are even some of this riff-raff;" says the abbreviator of the *Traité de la Polygamie Sacrée*, "who, after having abused women who before were respectable, under the credit, favor and authority of their abbot master, have espoused daughters against the will and consent of their fathers." As to the valets of the monks, who, according to the statistics, existed to the number of a thousand, and who kept up at that time "a terrible charivari in the matter of lechery," they are represented as the infamous ones who "enter the most honorable houses, there to debauch the girls and servant-maids; and for our sole recompense, we are constrained to rear their bastards." The Protestant writer completes his hideous portrait with one last brush-stroke: "As for those who are so chaste," he says, "as to have but one or two lecheresses, be assured that in

their *cahuetes* and small-clothes you will be able to smell all the fumes of sodomy." Finally, he states that, in the villages neighboring the abbey of Cluny, there had been counted from 700 to 800 debauched women, exclusively serving the monks and their valets: "We have but to read in the *Traité de la Polygamie Sacrée*," he cries, after having indicated this *compte fait*, "and we shall find plenty of subtle monastics and *debendodes* of monks, the most voluptuous that it is possible to conceive."

To so many turpitudes, to so many open or hidden excesses, the zeal of the Huguenots opposed one single remedy, which was looked upon as infallible—namely, marriage. The Huguenots would have all the ecclesiastics and their celibate servants respond to the following questions: "1. As to whether they are chaste. 2. As to whether they have ever had knowledge of women or girls; and how many of the latter they have kept and are keeping." In case the responses were negative on the latter point, there were other more pressing questions: "1. As to whether they have ever had copulation with demons. 2. As to whether they have ever disported themselves at sodomy. 3. As to whether they know that continence is a singular gift of God, which he does not give to all, but only to certain persons, and sometimes for a time only, and that those to whom it has not been given, ought to resort to marriage, since this is the remedy ordained by the Lord." As a consequence, the marriage of clerics should be required and ordained by the religious law, and all the more since the five articles proposed and adopted at the conference of Poissy, as the necessary safeguard of public morality, had never been put into execution on the part of the clergy. Those five articles included all the moral guaranties which could be invented against lust and its disastrous effects. In the first place, those ecclesiastics who did not possess the divine gift of continence were required to fast on bread and water for nine days "every time they felt themselves piqued or pricked by desires of the flesh;" secondly, they might not "speak nor communicate to women or to girls," except in the presence of the husbands or parents of the girls, "under pain of being degraded and revoked; thirdly, they might not drink wine except twice a week," and that "in order to possess a better means of containing themselves;" fourthly, they were required at marriage feasts to "content themselves with dancing a simple *bransle*, with the most beautiful, holy and gracious gestures of which they were master;" fifthly, auricular confession

was only to take place in a chapel with five or six penitents at once, "in order that the confessor might do nothing that was not to the point."

The author of the *Cabinet du Roy de France*, in thus unmasking and tracking down the scandals of sacred polygamy, imagines that he has proved that the first precious pearl to be retrieved from this mire is "the word of God or true religion, by the means of which the King may once more purge the realm of this villainous and detestable polygamy." The second pearl, the Nobility, would appear to be less "sunk in the mire" (*embourbée*) than the other; however, the rigid reformer, after having proposed the principle that "the true nobility is an utter enemy of this detestable polygamy," goes on to incriminate those gentlemen "who make so great a case of nobility of blood, while they make so little of the nobility of virtue, to such a point that it seems to some that no vices can dishonor or pollute that nobility which they claim from their fathers and ancestors." He regards, then, the false nobles as the most dangerous props of polygamy, and the enumeration which he makes of these false nobles shows us the character and the "calibre" of each; there are "*gentilshommes de la mort-dieu* and other similar blasphemers," "gentlemen made in haste (*gentilshommes faits a la hâte*)," "gentlemen fillers of silk (*enfileurs de soye*)," "gentlemen of the holy saucepan-faith (*de la foy sainte marmite*)," "gentlemanly white wolves, he-wolves, teases, scoundrels (*gentilshommes loups blance, loups garoux, taquins, maraux*), etc." Prostitution undoubtedly did not play a mediocre rôle in all this gentlemanliness; but the author lacks data and exact figures; he is obliged to confine himself to vague generalities, and he is thus content, in his inquiry into the French nobility, with mentioning the distinctive characteristics, good or bad, which belonged to those of this or that province. Those of Touraine are always swearers and blasphemers, atheists or "Epicureans;" those of Guyenne are pillagers and counterfeiterers; those of Gascony are cruel and sanguinary, etc. "The vice which reigns most in Berry, among the gentlemen, is lechery. While the nobles of other provinces are not exempt from this vice, they are not so imbued with it as those of Berry, though for this it would be hard to state the reason, since they conform entirely to the manners of those who practice polygamy; they abound in filthy and villainous vices, of which this is not the least; but I am constrained to pause here with stating that, what they do to the wives of their relatives or neighbors, the same is done to their own." This

corrector of the nobility returns, then, to his favorite subject, in accusing the clergy of Berry of all the disorders which the gentlemen of the country permit themselves in the way of sacred polygamy. He denounces the immoral relations of noble ladies with the ecclesiastics; he flays the nonchalance of husbands with regard to the conduct of their wives: "It is a very manifest dissoluteness," he cries, with the holy indignation of a preaching friar, "to leave the bed of one's husband and go at midnight to seek out Monsieur the abbot, a prior, or another, clad in such colors, and all the night, with other women and without the knowledge of their husbands, to sport and dance in such company, with the immodest lessons which are there given, so strange and so monstrous that the inveterate whores of the brothels blush with shame at the like; it is a dissoluteness, if not sheer pimp-ery, to give to drink to such good-for-nothings and their lecheresses, and then to take the cup and drink with them. If the trade keeps up, as it does in Berry, you will see a whole province confirmed in all wickedness and all filth."

One might hope, after this exordium, that our anonymous author, who has been so prodigal with figures on the subject of sacred polygamy, would end by giving us a set of statistics of the same sort *à propos* of the nobility of Berry, whom he would appear to have known better than those of other provinces. But he does not here fulfill our expectations by giving us calculations as to the number of wives and daughters of gentlemen who were given to debauchery. He prefers to edify us, on this delicate point, by relating an adventure which might prove something if it happened frequently enough. Nine depraved gentlemen and three other young fellows of good family were at a fair near Blanc, and after having danced a few *bransles*, they took their own relatives to an abbot "of mark," who had invited them to take supper at his house. The abbot, who was expecting them, had "prepared" fourteen or fifteen women, "of whom he had made use on previous occasions." The company was a joyous and good-humored one; they sat down at table and there dined on all sorts of *épices* and comfitures. Then a page began strumming a lute, and for two consecutive hours the company danced; after the dance, they promenaded in the garden and the vineyard: "each holding his nymph by the arm, they went into the wood, so that it was two o'clock in the morning before they began to leave." The abbot and three of his prothonotaries were members of the party, and all of them were "as

content as it was possible." The time was thus spent till supper; the company supped copiously, and the "promenades" began again, no longer in the woods, but "on the beds and couches." The next day, the rumor ran about that one of the most respectable ladies of Berry had been unable to save her virtue from the claws of a harpy, and after having for a long time merited the title of good woman, she "passed for a woman of the country." It was one of her cousins-german who had caused her to fall into the trap where she had lost her honor, and when this shameful *maquignon* of the abbot's pleasures was reproached with having prostituted his own relative and was threatened with being pointed out to the husband, who might demand an account of this treason, he replied, laughingly: "My cousin is too wise not to know that if the pigs had not done that, neither she nor I would eat any more lard." The historian of polygamy adds, as though to confirm his tale, that the gentlemen of Berry are "so villainous that they lend their wives to one another!"

The author recurs on a number of occasions to these culpable disorders, which he imputes to the ecclesiastics; but he makes no effort to give us a more precise idea of the ravages of Prostitution among the Nobility and the Third Estate. He lacks, evidently, circumstantial notes on this head. His intentions are excellent, despite the excessive spleen of his attacks on sacred polygamy: "It is necessary," he says, "that good in this realm should be stronger and more powerful than evil; it is necessary that modesty have the upperhand over incivility, nobility over villainy and chastity over all impurity." He adjures the good citizens to join him in his efforts to correct manners and morally restore the French monarchy. He then enters upon certain financial calculations, and reviews with a prodigious wealth of detail the different sources of revenue of the Gallican Church; he concludes that this revenue, which amounts to 110 millions, is sufficient not only to keep the clergy, which will not spend more than 70 millions, once it shall have been subjected to a matrimonial régime, but sufficient also to supply the needs of the King. The whole secret of this great reform consists in the marriage of the polygamists and in the joining of the temporal domains of the ecclesiastics to the estates of the crown. One is tempted to take under consideration a plan of political economy based upon figures and combinations which appear to be too minute not to be real; for the author of this singular project presents, as a specimen of his labors, a complete statement of all the revenues of the

archbishopric of Lyons, and he boasts of having left nothing out of this statistical picture, not a capon, not a pint of oats, not a wagon-load (*charre*) of straw. This marvelous aptitude for calculation, which was a thing at once rare and new, gives us a certain confidence in the special census which had been made by the author or authors of the *Polygamie Sacrée*. We do not believe, however, that the remedy proposed by this terrible adversary of celibacy would have secured the beneficent and prompt effects expected of it in the way of an amelioration of manners. The marriage of all the ecclesiastics who were financial tributaries of the King would undoubtedly have diminished the number of those mercenaries about them who lived by means of Prostitution; but Prostitution itself, which the royal ordinances had not succeeded in wiping out by depriving it of its legal and regular aspect, would have continued to reproduce itself like mold in the shadow of the convents and colleges. And yet, the author of the *Cabinet du Roy de France* was so thoroughly convinced of the sovereign efficacy of his connubial panacea that he besought the worthy and virtuous Cardinal of Bourbon, aged fifty-eight years at that time, to set a salutary example to the clergy and the nobility by being the first to marry, making solemn confession of his infractions of the law of "virginity and continence as required of celibates." Marriage of this sort, according to the anticipations of this retriever of Pearls would inevitably, in a short time, lead to three or four hundred thousand marriages, "pure and legitimate." "You will prevent, by this means," remarks the malicious Huguenot to the poor Cardinal, whom he suspects of having broken his vow of chastity more than seven times, "you will prevent each year thirty or forty thousand incests in the Gallican Church; fie, also on sodomy! for twenty-five or thirty thousand persons who are accustomed to indulge in this vice will be free of it by means of marriage; and we shall eventually obtain the total suppression of all the whores, cardinal, episcopal, abbatial, canonical, monastic, presbyterial and all the others of whatsoever quality or order . . . , as well as the likely suppression of all ruffians, lecherers, pimps, procuresses, and bastards, the upkeep of whom is more than sufficient to pay all the debts, extraordinary as well as ordinary, of the crown of France. Behold, then, the profit which marriage would bring; but behold also an even greater good which would follow, and that is that all those veiled and recluse ladies in the monasteries and convents would marry and give a good kick to their incubi, and to all the copulation and demonomania which

the Enemy of nature practices upon and inspires in this poor sex!" The Cardinal did not marry, despite the good advice which had been given him, and polygamy went its way.

We certainly have no desire to give to this curious work more credence than it deserves; we agree with the Marquis of Paulmy (*Mélanges Tirés d'une Grande Bibliothèque*) that the author displays in it "a gross and revolting prejudice against the clergy;" but we are forced to recognize the fact that the clergy of the 16th century was far from being commendable for those virtues which should always be its property. Dulaure, in his *Histoire de Paris* (pages 516 and following of Volume IV. of the 12 mo. edition), has collected certain incontestible evidence relating to the corruption and perversity of the ecclesiastical body, and this evidence agrees almost literally with the assertions of the *Polygamie Sacrée*. Jean de Montluc, Bishop of Valance, remarked, on the 23rd of August, 1560, in the course of a speech delivered in the King's Council: "The cardinals and the bishops have not hesitated to give their benefices to their *maistres d'hostel* and, what is more, to their *valets de chambre*, cooks, barbers and lackeys. The same priests, by their avarice, ignorance and dissolute life, rendered themselves odious and contemptible to all the world." (*Mem. de Condé*, Volume I, page 560.) In an assemblage of notables held in the town hall of Paris, in the month of December, 1575, three hundred remonstrances to the King were drawn up, among which the following passage is to be remarked: "The bishops and curates do not reside within their benefices and bishoprics, but leave and abandon their poor flocks to the mouth of the wolf, without any pasturage or instruction. . . . and the ecclesiastics are so extremely excessive in lust, avarice and other vices that the scandal has become public." The same year, a Catholic writer, C. Marchand, also drew up some *Remonstrances au Peuple François, sur les Diversitéz des Vices qui Regnent en ce Temps* (Remonstrances to the French people on the Diversity of Vices which Reign at this Time): "Are there any today any more gone in vice," cried the author with bitterness, "than the prelates of the Church?" He goes on to reproach the curates and the monks with frequenting "the wine-shops, the gambling-houses and the brothels;" he complains of the shameful excesses which were defiling the house of the Lord. Similar complaints are to be found in a multitude of historical documents, which do not come from the Protestants, and which have never found contradictors. Brantôme, for example, has given us, in the *Vie*

de François I, a sorry picture of the interior of abbeys before the Concordat; he pictures the monks as choosing for abbot "him who was the best companion, who best loved the lasses, dogs and birds, who was the best drinker; in brief, him who was the most debauched, in order that, having made him their abbot or prior, he might afterward permit them all such debauches, dissoluteness and pleasures." The following proverb, which scandalized no one, was prevalent among the people: "Avaricious or lecherous as a priest or a monk." Finally, Brantôme dares to speak of the bishops and the abbots in these terms: "God only knows what lives they lead! Certainly, they are more assiduous in their dioceses than they have ever been before, for they never budge out of them. But why should they, seeing that they lead there a life which is wholly dissolute, with dogs, birds, feasts, banquets, confraternities, wedding-feasts and seraglios of whores? I have heard tell of one in the old days who made a search for pretty little girls of the age of ten years, of promising beauty, and then boarded them out here and there among the parishes and villages as gentlemen do their hounds, in order to make use of them when they were full grown."

This depravity, these vices, these abuses were certainly but afflicting exceptions in the Catholic Church; Brantôme himself is pleased to admit this fact: "Our bishops of today," he says, "are more discreet, at least wiser hypocrites, hiding better their black vices, as a certain great personage one day remarked to me. And that which I have to say of certain of them, in the old days as well as in the present, and of their abuses, this is not true of all please God! For in all times, there have been many, regular as well as secular, of very good and holy life, even as there still are, and as there will be, by the grace of God, who loves and never abandons His people."

However, in the interest of truth, and without desiring to detract from the homage payed by Brantôme to the irreproachable conduct of certain prelates, we shall go on to compare with the facts and calculations cited by the author of the *Cabinet du Roy de France* a certain judicial document of which Dulaure, who knew it at first hand, unhesitatingly guarantees the authenticity. It is an investigation, ordered by decree of the Parliament of Paris, at the request of the syndics and consuls of the city of Aurillac, and carried out in 1555 by the lieutenant-general of the presiding magistrate of that city. We shall leave the matter to Dulaure, who goes into analyze this inquiry,

in the course of which more than eighty witnesses were heard: "Charles de Senectaire, Abbot of the convent of Aurillac and lord of that city; his nephews, Jean Belveser, called Jonchières, a prothonotary, and Antoine de Senectaire, Abbot of Saint-Jeans; his niece, Marie de Senectaire, Abbess of Bois, a convent of the same city, and the monks and religious of one and the other convent were in the habit of giving themselves over to all sorts of excesses and debaucheries. Each monk lived, in the convent, with one or more concubines, girls whom he had debauched or seduced from under the paternal roof, or women whom he had ravished and seduced from their husbands. These monks fed and lodged these women with themselves, and the children who resulted, bastard infants, amounted in number to seventy, and they took ordinarily the offerings which were made to the church. . . . The Abbot had in the garden of the abbatial residence, a structure destined for his debauchees, adorned with obscene pictures and bearing the characteristic name of "*f. . . oir de M. d'Aurillac*;" the priests were the ordinary purveyors of this infamous place; the abbot's nephews also fulfilled the same shameful functions. They laid contributions not only on the city but on all the surrounding villages; they snatched young girls from the arms of their mothers in the light of open day, in the sight and hearing of the inhabitants; they braved public opinion, despite the tears and cries of their victims, whom they drove with kicks and blows of the fist to the convent, where they were to serve the lubricity of the abbot, his nephews, and lastly, of the other monks." (*Hist. Civ. Phys. et Morale de Paris*, 12 mo. edition of 1825, Volume IV, page 522.) Does this not sound as though we were reading a page of the *Traité de la Polygamie Sacrée*? As a result of this inquiry, the convent was secularized, and the city of Aurillac found itself at last delivered from its abominable tyrants.

After having read the resumé of the judicial inquiry which Dulaure, unfortunately, has tarnished with his own inimical partiality, we are forced to repeat, with the author of the *Cabinet du Roy de France* (page 132): "Should we then be astonished if Mademoiselle de la Polygamie paws the earth and abounds and lechers in all the families of this realm, corrupting, polluting, and spoiling them by her incests and lecheries?" It must be remarked, however, that the license of manners among the clergy, and especially among the innumerable army of lay hangers-on, was the inevitable consequence of public demoralization at this time, when so few persons possessed a true idea of public

decency (*honnêteté*), from the social point of view. The reformed religion, by its example and its bitter reprimands, aided much, it must be confessed, in purifying the manners of the Catholic clergy, which was soon to display so many chaste and glorious virtues.

CHAPTER LXXV

BEFORE seeking to discover what was the state of Prostitution at the court of Henri III, we cannot, without leaving a noticeable lacuna in this history of manners, designedly omit to mention a species of depravity that left profound traces of its defilement on the reign of this last of the Valois. It is an abominable subject, and one which we shall treat with all the disgust which it inspires in us, and with all the discretion and decency of language that is possible, in making extracts from contemporary works. It is impossible to concern oneself with the shameful era of Henri III. without speaking of that monarch's mignons* and the turpitudes associated with their master's memory. All the gravest and most serious historians, D'Aubigné, De Thou, Mézeray, etc., have not feared to stain their pages by reporting there, for the instruction of posterity, the abominations which defiled the private life of a Most Christian King; it was only Père Daniel who endeavored to justify it all, or at least to cover it with his complacent reticence: "Although it is not necessary to credit," he says in his great *Histoire de France*, "all that the Huguenots and the Leaguers have written of his secret debauches, it is, on the other hand, difficult to believe that what was said was generally false." We shall not undertake to defend Henri III. and his mignons against those accusations which were then in all mouths, and which soon came to constitute the formidable voice of public opinion; but we do recognize, with Père Daniel, that the calumnies of the Huguenots, and later those of the Leaguers, smeared, so to speak, a thousand extravagant ordures upon a canvas unhappily all too realistically scandalous. The horrible episode of Henri's mignons appears to us to have been singularly exaggerated by the spirit of religious and political partisanship.

It cannot be denied that the arrival of the Italians in France, in the train of Catherine de' Medici, exerted a definite and deplorable influence on the manners of the court; but if certain young and debauched noblemen sometimes gave themselves to the imitation of the "*vilaines cotumes de Chouse*" (which was the term employed in referring to Italianized France), they were careful not to boast of their infamous

*Translator's Note:—For convenience, as in the case of "lenon", the word is hereafter treated as an English one.

carryings-on, which were all too opposed to the national spirit of gallantry; they like the others energetically resisted in public a vice which inspired horror in all decent folk. But this wholly French feeling of shame was gradually lost, and tolerance came to take the place of an implacable indignation. "And if it was only for that sodomy which we see today," cried Henri Estienne, in his *Apologie pour Hérodoté*, published in 1576, but written previously, "might we not with good right call this century of ours the paragon of wickedness, not to say of detestable and execrable vice?" The people, who constituted the heart of the nation, remained, however, it must be stated, free of this *méchanceté*, and the deplorable example of the court had been powerless to corrupt the old-time purity of the bourgeoisie. Sodomy, which was but an ordinary sin in Italy, where the sinner might find absolution by paying thirty-six pounds, and nine ducats (see the *Taxes des Parties Casuelles de la Boutique du Pape*, translated by A. du Pinet, edition of Lyons, 1564, in-8), became in France a capital crime for which the offender was condemned to the stake. It is true that the tribunals very rarely enforced this penalty provided by the law, when the crime, which was looked upon as an act of heresy, was not mingled with acts of magic, sorcery or atheism. "I am a knave," says Maître Janotus de Bragmardo, in his harangue to Gargantua (Rabelais, Book I, Chapter 20), "if they do not have you burned as *bougres*, traitors, heretics and seducers, enemies of God and of the virtues!" Those libertines who were merely suspected of this indelible *macule* were, then, everywhere pointed out, "fled and abhorred," as Rabelais says. The French found it hard to pardon the Italians, established in France since the marriage of the Dauphin Henri to the daughter of Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino, for having introduced a novel form of debauchery, as the French put it. The author of the *Cabinet du Roy de France*, in his epistle to Henri III., did not hesitate to denounce "atheism, sodomy, and all other sinister or stinking academies which the stranger has introduced into France." . . . But, fifteen years before him, Henri Estienne had endeavored to revenge Italy and the Italians by launching the following cruel epigram against Nicolas Maillard of the Sorbonne: "Now I would not say that all those who are stained with this sin have learned it in Italy or in Turkey, for our Maistre Maillard professes it, and yet he has never been in those countries."

We have shown elsewhere that the expeditions into Italy had been

fatal to French morals; the constant relations which existed between the two countries since the reign of Charles VIII could not have failed to spread odious elements of corruption among the nobility and the army. Henri Estienne describes thus the hideous instruction which Italy had given France: "To return to this infamous sin," he says in his *Apologie pour Hérodote* (page 107 of the original edition of 1566), "is it not a great pity that some who, before setting foot in Italy, abhorred the very talk of such things, after having dwelt there, take pleasure not only in speaking of it, but in making a profession of it among themselves as of something they have learned at a good school?" But although Italian vice had made such saddening progress at the court of France, all men of honor still maintained a profound contempt for these unworthy deserters of *l'amour francais*, which latter alone was "approved and recommended," according to Brantôme's expression. We find in the writings of Brantôme evidence of the feeling of repulsion which was aroused by these filthy and ignoble distractions, even at a time when Prostitution no longer knew any bounds: "Thus have I heard tell from a very gallant man of my time," Brantôme says, in his *Dames Galantes*, "and it is also true, that no *bougre* (bugger) nor *bardache* (bardash) was ever brave, valiant, and generous except the great Julius Caesar; also that, by divine will, such abominable ones are cast down and subjected to reproof. Wherefore I am astonished that a number, whom I have known to be defiled with this repulsive vice, have continued in the great prosperity of Heaven, but God awaits them, and in the end, we shall see what is to become of them." Brantôme, who had a conscience so broad and so undaunted in matters of gallantry, thus haughtily displays his disgust at vices contrary to nature; this was at the very moment when the court of Henri III. was brazenly assuming those Italian manners which Brantôme condemns and brands in his *Dames Galantes*, which still may be looked upon as the repertoire of 16th century debauchery. Brantôme wrote, it is true, this treatise of lubricious morality under the inspiration of the Queen of Navarre, Marguerite de Valois, who had been put at the head of the *bande des dames*. There was, thus, at the court of Charles IX. a sort of feminine coalition, formed to oppose the shameful excesses of an "Italianized" youth. "I should not be greatly astonished," says Henri Estienne, in his *Deux Dialogues de Langue François Italianisé*, "if the ladies, Italianizing in their language, like the men, have also desired to Italianize in other things."

When Henri III., who was King of Poland, was called to succeed his brother, Charles IX., the Italians had already obtained a great foothold at the court of France; but their villainous manners were only propagated secretly, and no one dared to avow himself a member of their band. Thus, the poet to the King, Étienne Jodelle, who was looked upon as a herald of unnatural love, was disgraced even in the eyes of his friends of the Pleiades by prostituting his muse to compose, at Charles IX.'s order it was said, the *Triomphe de Sodome*. "He was employed by the late King Charles," relates Pierre de l'Estoile, who has reported in his *Registres Journaux* the "very miserable and frightful" end of this Parisian poet, "as the most villainous and lascivious of all, to write the *arrière hilme* (*hymne*), to what the late King called the sodomy of his provost of Nantouillet." (See the *Journal de Henri III.*, edition of MM. Champollion, page 29, under the year 1573.) When Henri III. left France to betake himself to Poland, where a crown was awaiting him, we may be assured he was not tainted with the shameful vice which he was to contract upon his return to the realm of his fathers. He had always been, from his earliest youth, inclined to luxury, ardent in pleasure, sensual and a libertine; but although surrounded by perverse and voluptuous courtiers, he had not as yet abandoned himself to the culpable aberrations of Italian debauchery. It would be difficult to say whether he had acquired this infamous taste in Poland or at Venice, where he passed a few days upon returning to take possession of the throne of France. "Since the death of the Princess of Condé," says Mézeray, in his *Abrégé Chronologique de l'Histoire de France* (Volume V, page 251), "Henri III had had little attachment for women; his adventure in Venice had given him another bent." This "adventure in Venice" was none other than a venereal malady, which the King had contracted in passing, and from which he had difficulty in curing himself. The Princess of Condé, Mary of Clèves, whom Henri III. loved to distraction, died at Paris on Saturday, the 30th of October, six weeks after having seen once more her royal lover, who had come back to her in a piteous condition following his "adventure in Venice". Following are the dates which permit us to fix, in a manner nearly certain, the period at which the King's frightful carryings-on began.

Barely was Henri III. back at the Louvre than he was to be seen forming about him a court of mignons and "Italians." These latter from the start aroused in the people of Paris a feeling of irritation,

which was not slow in becoming an implacable hatred. The scholars of the University set themselves up as the interpreters of this wholly national hatred and would pursue the Italian *bande* with songs, *pastiles* and insulting placards. There were riots and murders upon the occasion of a quarrel which had been provoked by the bad manners of these strangers. In the month of July, 1575, a brave captain named La Vergerie was condemned to death and hanged for having remarked publicly that, in this quarrel, "there was nothing to do but take the side of the scholars and cut the throats of all those Italian *bougres* who were the cause of France's ruin." Pierre de l'Estoile, who relates the captain's sad end, affirms that the King assisted at the execution, although not having approved this "iniquitous" judgment; but we may suppose that the "hasty trial" (*procès bien court*) of this unfortunate one had not been held without the express order of Henri III., although the Chancellor René de Buigue, had had personal charge of it. Following the condemnation and punishment of La Vergerie, "the people proceeded to attack by all sorts of writings and pamphlets (not being able to do worse) the Italian messires and the Queen (Catherine de Medici), their good patron and mistress." Pierre de l'Estoile collected a number of these satires among other stanzas and sonnets against the Italians, to whom were imputed all the evils and all the disorders of the realm.

But the following year, it was no longer a case of the Italians, for it seemed as if the mignons had caused them to disappear. Pierre de l'Estoile, that faithful echo of all the gossip of his time, wrote, under date of July, 1576, in his *Registres Journaux*: "The name of mignons began, at this time, to be heard in the mouths of the people, to whom they were very odious, as much for their actions, which were haughty and insulting, as for their rouge and their feminine and immodest accoutrements, but especially on account of the immense gifts and liberality which the King gave and showed them, since in the opinion of the people they were the cause of his ruin, although the truth is that the fruit of such liberality, not being able to remain in their hands a single moment, was at once transmitted to the people, as water is by a conduit. These fine mignons wore their hair long, curled and recurled by artificial devices, and gathered up above their little velour bonnets in the manner of the whores, to say nothing of the ruffles on their shirts, of fine material, starched and half a foot long, in such a fashion that, to see their heads above their ruffles, it looked

as though it were the head of St. John on a platter. The rest of their habiliments were the same; their exercises were to game, blaspheme, leap, dance, vault, quarrel and lecher, and to follow the King everywhere and into all companies; and not to do or say anything that was not to his pleasure; caring little, the truth is, for God and virtue, being content to be in the good graces of their master, whom they feared and honored more than God." (See the *Journal de Henri III.*, edition of MM. Champollion.)

This passage is very important, in that it fixes in a positive manner the date of the appearance of the mignons, or at least the period when they began to be hated by the people. Otherwise, Pierre de l'Estoile does not say anything which describes their unnatural manners, and the portrait which he gives of them might be applied to all the courtiers. Following this portrait, he records a poem, composed in fifteen strophes, "which was published at this time at Paris and divulged everywhere under this title: *Les Vertus et Propriétés des Mignons* (The Virtues and Properties of Mignons), 25th of July, 1576." The editors of the *Journal de Henri III.* do not publish more than six of the strophes of this poem, which is printed in full with the title of *Indignitéz de la Cour* (Indignities of the Court), in the *Cabinet du Roy de France* (page 297). There are certain differences between the two texts, but we may remark that, in neither is the accusation of sodomy formulated against the mignons, except in the form of an insulting doubt:

*Ces beaux mignons prodigument
Se veautrent parmy leurs delices,
Et peut-estre dedans telz vices
Qu'on ne peut dire honnestement.**

The anonymous author, who is certainly a good poet, attacks especially the dissoluteness and the luxury of their habits, which he looks upon as shameful signs of their misconduct. Following are a few strophes in which the costume of Henri III. and his favorites is described with much exactitude:

*Leur parler et leur vestement
Se voit tel, qu'une honneste femme*

*Translator's Note:—"These lads are schooled (such is their fame)
In delights that are most nice,
And schooled, it may be, in many a vice
One could not rightly name."

*Auroit peur de recevoir blâme
 S'habillant si lascivement:
 Leur col ne se tourne à leur aise
 Dans le long replis de leur fraise;
 Déjà le froment n'est pas bon
 Pour l'empoix blanc de leur chemise:
 Il faut, pour facon plus exquise,
 Faire de riz leur amidon.*

*Leur poil est tondu par compas,
 Mais non d'une facon pareille;
 Car, en avant, depuis l'aureille,
 Il est long, et, derrière, bas:
 Il se tient droit par artifice,
 Car une gomme le hérisse
 Ou retord ses plis refriséz,
 Et, dessus leur teste légère,
 Un petit bonnet par derrière
 Les monstre encor plus desquiséz.*

*Je n'ose dire que le fard
 Leur soit plus commun qu'à la femme;
 J'aurois peur de leur donner blâme
 Qu'entre eux ils pratiquassent l'art
 De l'impudique Ganimède.
 Quant à leur habit, il excède
 Leur bien et un plus grand encor;
 Car le mignon, qui tout consomme,
 Ne se vest plus en gentilhomme,
 Mais, comme un prince, de drap d'or.**

We have followed by preference the text of the *Cabinet du Roy de France*, but it is well to observe that, in this text, the poet practically

**Translator's Note:*—The words they speak, the clothes they wear
 Are such as any honest dame
 Would blush from fear and very shame
 To be seen in anywhere;
 Their necks are never at their ease.
 In ruffled folds that greatly please
 Their fancy, while wheat's not so white
 As is the bosom of the chemise
 Which they effect, the sight to tease;
 Their starch like rice is fair and light.

avoids permitting a suspicion that these mignons “practiced the art of the immodest Ganymede;” on the other hand, in the version, evidently altered, furnished us by the *Journaux* of l’Estoile, the sense is quite different, for the author there states very positively that which he “does not dare to say:”

*Je n’ose dire que le fard
Leur est plus commun qu’à la femme
(J’aurois peur d’en recevoir blâme),
Et qu’entre eux ils pratiquent l’art
De l’impudique Ganimède.**

We have here a very significant insinuation, and one that is equivalent to a formal declaration. In another passage in this piece of verse, these “effeminate” are reproached with having trafficked in, exchanged, sold, and dispensed the benefices and

*Les biens voués au crucifix,
Que l’on leur baille en mariage,
En guerdon de maquerellage
Ou pour chose de plus vil prix.***

They trim their tresses by the chart,
But not in any even sort:
Behind, they wear it very short,
And long in front, with mincing art:
It stands erect with cunning grace;
They use a gum to keep’t in place
And to preserve its charming curl.

While on the light head of each dear
A little bonnet, perched in the rear,
Disguises him like any girl.

I should not say that they make use
Of rouge as much as any dame,
And I should hesitate to blame
Their ways or say that they abuse
Themselves like Ganymedes.
As to their clothing, it exceeds
Their state and more, when all is told:
For the mignon who gets all he can
Dresses not like a gentleman,
But, like a prince, in cloth of gold.

*Translator’s Note:—These lines have been translated above.

**Translator’s Note:—The Church’s goods they barter, slice;
They show no scruple in robbing her
To provide a dot for a panderer,
Or something of more vile a price.

It would appear to us to be a fact, established by this satire, dated 1576, that the mignons of Henri III, in the beginning were not looked upon as the immodest representatives of Italian debauchery. They were accused merely of devouring the substance of the people, exhausting the coffers of the State, wearing indecent habits and living in luxurious idleness. Another poet takes it upon himself to reply to the *Indignités* of the court, and he does so in a high-flown and flowery poem which he calls *Les Blasons de la Cour*; without taking account of the indirect imputations concerning the manners of the courtiers, he merely blames the "satiric tongues and mordant wits" with having spread the report that the court of France was "a stable,"

*Un retrait des abus, des dissolutions.**

One might, therefore, deduce, from the very terms of this poetic factum, that the debauchery of the mignons was not at first marked out and branded with the red iron of public disapproval. There were, undoubtedly, many who were blameworthy and reprehensible in their conduct; but calumny, in attacking them, invented everything which might render them more odious and dishonorable. Hence the infamous rôle which was attributed to the mignons, that is to say, to all those men, young and voluptuous for the most part, who constituted the "King's band" (*bande du roi*). What had been at first but a sad exception among the disorderly favorites of Henri III, came to be regarded as a general vice, and the court of France came to be looked upon, thus, in the eyes of an indignant people, as the seat of the most abominable Prostitution. Dulaure has reason to say that Henri III. "was distinguished from his predecessors by his effeminate tastes, and especially by his ultra-montane debaucheries." (*Hist. de Paris*, Volume IV., page 493, 12 mo. edition.) But the fact must be recognized that the Huguenots and the Leaguers were not without blame when it came to spreading this redoubtable calumny against the King and his mignons: "The infamy which the ladies and maids of the court had incurred," says Dulaure, with too great a show of partiality, "was extended during this latter reign to the young courtiers, who, more despicable than the women, gave themselves with their master to the most disgusting excesses and debauchery."

The mignons were young lords of good family and fine bearing whom René de Villequier and François d'O, who presided over the

*Translator's Note:—A den of abuses, of dissoluteness.

King's pleasures, had introduced to the intimacy of that Prince. The best known among them were Jacques de Lévy de Caylus, François de Maugrion, Jean Darcet de Liveraut, François d'Epinay de Saint-Luc, Paul Estuer de Caussade de Saint-Mesgrin, Anne de Joyeuse, and Bernard and Jean-Louis de Nogaret, sons of Jean de la Valette. The others were less well known, for the reason that they did not possess so much favor with Henri III: their names were never heard beyond the court. Some of them, however, are designated in a sonnet which was circulated throughout Paris in 1577, and which has been preserved in the *Registres-Journaux* of Pierre de l'Estoile. This sonnet might serve to prove that the mignons were not always "spoiled" (*gâtés*) by the same turpitudes.

*Saint-Luc, petit qu'il est, commande bravement
A la troupe Haultefort, que sa bourse a conquise;
Mais Quelus, dédaignant si pauvre marchandise,
Ne trouve qu'en son c . . . tout son advancement;*

*D'O, cest archi larron, hardy, ne scay comment,
Aime le jeu de main, craint aussi peu la prise;
L'Archant, d'un beau semblant, veut cacher sa sottise;
Sagonne est un peu bougre et noble nullement;*

*Montigny fait le begue, et voudroit bien sembler
Estre honneste homme un peu, mais il n'y peult aller;
Riberac est un sot, Tournon une cigale;*

*Saint-Mesgrin, sans subject bravache audacieux:
Je parlerois plus haut, sans la crainte des dieux,
De ceux qui tiennent rang en la belle cabale.**

*Translator's Note:—

Saint-Luc, the little dear, doth bravely rule
The Haultefort gang, by virtue of his purse;
But Quelus, disdainful, merely doth disburse
Another merchandise: he is no fool.

D'O's an arch-robber, bold and very cool:
I know not how, but he with sports doth nurse
His strength, while stupid l'Archant hides his curse;
As for Sagonne: a villain, like the rule.

Montigny stammers he's an honest wight,
And would appear one—but not in our sight;
Tournon's an insect, Riberac's a dunce;

Saint-Mesgrin's of the boldest, by all odds:
And I might well, without fear of the gods,
Speak loudlier, were I but started once.

This "villainous" (*vilain*) sonnet, as De l'Estoile says, "showing the corruption of the century and the court," contains, it would seem, only the names of those mignons who lent themselves to the most hideous Prostitution; by the "gods", whom the poet does not venture to name, we are to understand the King and his two assessors, D'O and Villequier, with some others, who shared the mastership in Italian debauchery. Pierre de l'Estoile also pictures the mignons for us as "ruffled and curled, with elevated crests, with *ratepennades* on their heads, a rouged appearance, with an ostentation of the same, painted, diapered and pulverized with violent powders and with odoriferous scents, which aromaticized the streets, places and houses which they frequented." This abuse of perfumes, these effeminate modes, these ridiculous or bizarre habits constitute the only griefs which this curious and gossipy chronicler appears to have against the mignons, but he in no wise describes their manners so as to lead us to believe that he gave credence to the rumors which were circulated about them; he is content with collecting scrupulously the satires and epigrams which especially go to prove the stubborn hatred of the public toward Henri III. and his favorites. Most of the latter, by the way, perished miserably, some slain in duels, others assassinated in ambushes, a number of them victims of various accidents; the horror which they inspired in the people was reflected in their funeral orations, but the insults and maledictions with which their memory was laden had no direct connection with authentic and notorious circumstances of their libidinous lives, which were always covered with an impenetrable veil.

This veil, the Protestant writers and those of the League endeavored to raise a long time after the mignons had disappeared, and the traditions concerning the court, disfigured and envenomed by malice, were reflected in a number of satiric works, which were not printed until the reign of Louis XIII., that is to say, twenty-five or thirty years after the death of Henri III. There had appeared during the lifetime of this Prince only a few pieces in verse and prose which were circulated at Paris under cover, and which never received a momentary publicity until after the Barricades; but previous to that, other pieces, still more infamous, had been circulated and "divulged" (*divulguées*), without any printer's daring to bring them out. Pierre de l'Estoile collected a number of these pieces in the *Registres-Journaux* and the *Ramas de Curiosités*, which he devoted to the anecdotal and

scandalous history of his times; all the editors of the *Journal de Henri III.* recoiled before the prospect of publishing smutty poems which were but sorry monuments to the horrible reputation of the mignons. In the last edition, which we owe to the intelligent care of the MM. Champollion, we read merely, under date of the 10th of September, 1850: "Divers poems and satiric writings were published against the King and his mignons, in those three years, 1577, 1578 and 1579; the which, for being the most of them so impious and so villainous that the paper on which they were written blushed, would have been, with their authors, worthy only of the flames in any other century except this one, which appears to be the final sewer of all those preceding. Among the titles: *La Catzrie des Trésoriers et des Mignons*, by M. . . , a fool and a Leaguer; the villainous sonnet to Saint Luc; a *Pasquil courtezan*, that is to say a smutty, villainous and lascivious composition, which was current at court in that year, 1579, and which was there quite commonly known; and there were also certain villainous verses which were written up over the door of the Abbey of Poissy one day when the King entered there." Each time that one of the King's mignons was taken away by a tragic death, to the inconsolable grief of his "good-master," when Caylus, Maugrion, Schomberg and Riberac were slain in duels, when Saint Mesgrin was assassinated one evening at the door of the Louvre, there occurred in all Paris, and even in the court, an outburst of atrocious pamphlets against the "ruffled mignons," but it would be unjust to regard these pamphlets as the loyal expression of historic truth; they represented the perfidious vengeance of the court rather than true political passions. There were not lacking, among the clerks of the palace and the University, poets to "blazon" the mignons in *vers courtesans*, "that is to say, verses of little decency, filthy and villainous, after the mode of the court, even when they touched the honor of the King," according to the definition given us by Pierre de l'Estoile.

Here, for example, is a satiric sonnet, which was current at Paris in 1578, and which came from the *boutique* of the League:

*Gammèdes (sic) effrontés, impudique canaille,
Cerveaux ambitieux, d'ignorance comblés,
C'est l'injure du temps et les gens mal zelés,
Qui vous font prosperer sous un roi fait de paille.*

*Ce n'est ni par assault ni par grande bataille,
Qu'avez eu la faveur, mais pour estre alliés
D'un corrompu esprit, l'un à l'autre enfilés,
Guidés de vostre chef, qui les honneurs vous baille,*

*Qui vos teints damoiseaux, vos perruques troussées,
Aime, autant comme escus et lames et espées.
Puisque les grands estats qui vous rendent infames*

*Sont de vice loïers aux jeunes impudents,
Gardez-les à tousjours, car les hommes vaillans
N'en veulent après vous, qui estes moins que femmes!**

This unheard-of outbreak against the mignons merely grew in intensity during the whole of Henri III.'s reign, and the people always ready to believe whatever is strange and monstrous, were only too ready to accept with defiance the frequently ridiculous calumnies on the subject of the "holy band" (*bande sacrée*).

Thus, it had been pretended very seriously that Jean-Louis Nogaret, Duke of Epemon, whom Pierre de l'Estoile terms the King's "arch-mignon," and who became, as a matter of fact, Henri III.'s principal favorite, following the death of the "great mignons," Caylus and Maugrion, was none other than a demon sent from Hell to complete the corruption and damnation of the unfortunate Henri of Valois. This diabolic legend was related at length in a pamphlet entitled: *Les choses horribles contenues en une Lettre envoyée à Henri de Valois par un enfant de Paris, le 28 janvier 1589, et imprimée sur la copie qui a*

*Translator's Note:—

Immodest rabble, Ganymedes without awe,
Ambitious brains, laden with ignorance,
It is the times, unhappy circumstance,
Which make you prosper with a king of straw.

'Tis not from battle-prowess that you draw
Your royal favor, but that you enhance
A mind corrupt and, led by your chief, chance
Your fortunes without fear of right or law.

He loves your well-trussed wigs and girlish faces
Better than blades and swords, the manly graces.
Then, those high offices, which each defiles,

Which are to young and bold-faced rascals given,—
Keep them forever; even knaves unshriven
Would not succeed your sickly woman-wiles.

*esté trouvée en ceste ville de Paris, près de l'Orloge du Palais, par Jacques Grégoire, imprimeur. MDLXXXIX.**

The *Enfant de Paris*, whom P. de l'Estoile describes as a "rascal and tool of the League" (*faquin et vaunéant de la Ligue*), relates in this letter, filled with obscenities, that the sorcerers and enchanters had given the King "for his pleasure" (*en jouissance*) a familiar spirit, named Terragon, and that this spirit, under the features of a young boy, had been presented to His Majesty at the Louvre as a gentleman of Gascony. The King had no sooner seen this gentleman than he called him brother and commanded him to sleep in his chamber. Now this vile Terragon was none other than the Duke of Epernon.

The *Enfant de Paris* enters, regarding the arch-mignon of the King, into marvelous details descriptive of his immodest *diablerie*. These details are so horrible that the MM. Champollion have not dared reproduce them, reprinting only in the form of extracts the letter of the *Enfant de Paris*, in the appendix to their edition of the *Journal de Henri III.*, which forms a part of the *Collection des Mémoires Relatifs à l'Histoire de France*, published by the MM. Michaud and Poujoulat.

There does not exist, perhaps, more than a single copy of the original edition of this "illustrious tomfoolery" (*badauderie insigne*), as P. de l'Estoile refers to it; but this collector of "fiddle-faddle" (*fadaïses*) has inserted a copy in his own hand into his great folio collection composed of printed placards and engravings in wood, and entitled: *Les belles Figures et Drolleries de la Ligue*. This precious and singular collection is preserved today in the department of printed books of the Imperial Library.

The people ordinarily attributed to the sorcerers those infamies of which Henri III. was accused by the voice of public opinion; these infamies impressed the credulous mob as being the natural consequences of the sorceries imputed to the unhappy King. Thus, no one at Paris doubted that the mignons, and above all the Duke of Epernon, were allied to their master by a diabolic pact; and everyone was convinced of this, when it was announced in the pulpit that material proofs of their abominable sacrileges had been discovered at the Louvre and the *Bois de Vincennes*, in the King's apartment.

**Translator's Note:*—"The horrible things contained in a Letter sent to Henri of Valois by a lad of Paris, the 28th of January, 1589, and printed from the copy which was found in this city of Paris, near the Palace Clock-Tower, by Jacques Gregoire, printer. 1589."

"There were two satyrs of gilded silver, of the height of four thumbs, holding each in the left hand and supporting above him a heavy club, and in the right sustaining a crystal vase, pure and very shining, elevated upon a round base, sustained by a four-foot pedestal. In these vases there were unknown drugs, which they had for oblations, and what was more, and more to be detested, they were in front of a cross of gold, in the middle of which there had been chased in wood the true Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ." This description, which we extract from a pamphlet which appeared at the time under this title: *Les Sorcelleries de Henri de Valois et les oblations qu'il faisoit au diable dans le Bois de Vincennes, avec la figure des démons d'argent doré, auxquels il faisoit offrandes** (Paris, Didier Millot, 1589), is, quite simply, that of two incense burners, placed in an oratory, on each side of a crucifix!

The author of the pamphlet indicates the impure and sacrilegious use which he assigns to these pretended idols by saying: "It is known that the pagans revered the satyrs as the gods of woods and desert places, because they thought that from them came skill in lechery."

It is impossible to cleanse the memory of Henri III of the stains which dishonor it, but it may be affirmed that the turpitudes with which this Prince and his mignons stand branded before the tribunal of history were neither as frequent nor as shameless nor as unheard of as one might suppose from reading the accusations of the Leaguers and the Huguenots. Thus, it is our opinion that, in many cases, the attachment of the King for his mignons was free of all degrading impurity, and we have not the courage to see a shameful passion in the evidence of friendship and regret which Henri III gave publicly upon the death of Caylus and Maugrion, when he wept for and kissed them, "both dead together" (*tous deux morts*), as l'Estoile relates, when he had their heads shorn to save their blond locks, and when he took from Caylus the earrings which he had given him and which he had attached with his own hand. Nothing is more touching, also, than the death of Caylus, who repeated with his last sigh: "Ah, my King! My King!" Nothing is more respectable than the grief of a king at the loss of a friend. But the people judged otherwise, and viewed with an evil eye the pompous tombs erected in honor of these young

**Translator's Note:*—"The Sorceries of Henri of Valois and the oblations which he made to the devil in the Wood of Vincennes, with a representation of the demons in gilded silver to whom he made the offerings."

effeminates whom they abhorred. The people, blinded and irritated by the maneuvers of anarchic parties, had taken an aversion to all the things they looked upon as the cause of their misery; they were but too well disposed to credit the horrors which they heard regarding the manners of the King and his entourage; they permitted themselves to be misled by appearances, and they were consciously prejudiced in advance against the courtiers, whose favorite recreations were masquerades or processions. The preachers, by their furious declamations exercised at that time the most unfortunate influence over public opinion, and Henri III had cause to repent not having closed their mouths; after having vilified and defamed him, they had him assassinated by Jaques Clement. "On the day of Shrove Tuesday," we read in the *Journal de Henri III*, under date of the 20th of February, 1583, "the King and his mignons were masked in the streets of Paris, where they committed innumerable insolences, and by night they went from house to house, in companies, up to six o'clock in the morning on the first day of Lent, on which day the majority of the preachers of Paris in their sermons cursed them openly for their said insolences of the night before."

It was undoubtedly to do penance for these follies that the King, a few days afterwards, instituted the Confraternity of Penitents, with processions like those of the *Battus* of Rome, in which the members, clad in white linen sacks, marched two abreast, singing psalms and fustigating themselves. But the mignons figured also in these processions, and their presence spoiled the effect. "I have been advised on good authority," cried the monk Poncet, who preached the Lenten sermon at Notre Dame, "that last night the spit turned for the supper of these fine penitents, and that after having eaten a fat capon, they had for their midnight collation the *petit tendron* which had been kept in waiting for them!" The preacher was imprisoned by order of the King, and the processions, lighted by torches, kept up; the King assisted in them, always clad in the costume of the Confraternity and surrounded by his mignons: "There were some, even among the mignons, according to what is said," reports P. de l'Estoile, "who lashed themselves in this procession, and whose poor backs were seen to be all red from the blows which they gave themselves. On which there were made a number of *quatrains* and *pasquils*, *sornettes* and likely *vilainies*, which were made and disseminated on this lashing and new penitence of the King and his mignons." Henri III, according to

the historians, had conceived these processions and public penances to expiate the villainous sins with which he secretly reproached himself, and into which he constantly fell back; he obliged the mignons, being his accomplices, to appear in these ceremonies, and there play the rôle of penitents; he went with them to visit the churches and convents, to make the Stations of the Cross and say prayers, to listen to the sermons and to gain indulgences. These were, the people remarked, merely preparations and encouragements to sin the more thereafter. The people were assured that the King had caused to have painted in his prayer book the portraits of his mignons in friars' habits. (See the *Confession de Sancy*, Chapter 8). It was related that he caused the companions of his devotions and his debaucheries to be lashed in his presence in his private chamber; it was asserted also that the Confraternity of Penitents had only been instituted in order to recruit vile followers and to propagate, under the cloak of a religious association, the infamous principles of sodomy. The *Journal de Henri III* informs us, as a matter of fact, that among the masters of ceremonies of the Confraternity was one Du Peirat, "a fugitive from Lyons for the crime of atheism and sodomy." It is easy to divine why the people named the Penitents "brothers of the closet" (*confrères du cabinet*) and "ministers of the sacred band" (*ministres de la bande sacrée*).

Sully, who gives us, in his *Oeconomies Royales*, a list of mignons, in which we remark, in addition to those already named, Bellegarde, Souvré, Du Bouchage and Thermas, makes no allusion to their manners, and states merely that each of them had been in succession the "favorite" of the King. The learned Le Duchat, in his notes on the *Confession de Sancy*, names four more mignons, after the *Memoires de l'Estat de la France Sous Charles IX* and the letters of Estienne Pasquier: "Le Voyer, Sire of Lignerolles; Pibrac; Roissy and Vic de Ville, who," adds the commentator, "were not looked upon as being equally vicious and corrupt." However this may be, all those gentlemen whom the King honored with a particular sympathy and intimacy were at once dishonored with the title of mignons or hermaphrodites. This latter name, less popular and more refined than the other, indicated the sort of Prostitution to which they owed, it was said, their standing at court and their fortune. Agrippa d'Aubigné, the Juvenal of this period, which he pictures for us as still more depraved than that of Nero and Domitian, devotes his verse and prose to

flaying Henri III's mignons. "Yes," he cries, in his *Tragiques* (Book II, page 83):

*Qui, les Hermaphrodites, monstres effeminéz,
Corrompus bourdeliers, et qui estoient mieux nez
Pour valets de putains que seigneurs sur les hommes,
Sont les monstres du siècle et du temps où nous sommes!**

Les Tragiques Donnez au Public par le Larcin de Prométhée were not printed until 1616 (*au désert*, in quarto, without name of author), but these admirable satires had been written in the youth of Agrippa d'Aubigné, who, while a zealous Calvinist, was none the less a man of honor and a great historian. Another work, equally satiric, but less passionate and less cruel than that of the poet of the *Tragiques*, had also been composed about this time to pillory the dissolute manners of Henri III's court; it did not see the light of day until a long while after its preparation, but a good while before the poem of D'Aubigné. We may, therefore, look upon it as a contemporary document, deserving of more confidence than the pamphlets and the *pasquils*** of the time, although it was but an ingenious and witty allegory.

The book of which we have just spoken, and which is merciless toward the mignons, is entitled simply *Les Hermaphrodites* in the first edition, which was published at Paris in a small 12 mo. volume, without name of place and without date, about the year 1604. The frontispiece presents us with a portrait of Henri III, standing and wearing at once the habit and the trappings of a man and of a woman, with this device, significant enough: *à tous accords*. Beneath it are to be read six enigmatic verses:

*Je ne suis male ny femelle,
Et si je sçay bien en cervelle,
Lequel des deux je dois choisir;
Mais qu'importe à qui je ressemble?*

*Translator's Note:—The Hermaphrodites, monsters effeminate,
Corrupt whore-masters, would keep better state
As brothel-valets; yet, behold: our lords,
The greatest monsters that our age affords.

**Translator's Note:—Cf., the Italian pasquinade, for a good account of which, see Edward Hutton's "*Pietro Aretino, Scourge of Princes*," London, Constable and Company, 1922.

*Il vaut mieux les avoir ensemble:
On en reçoit double plaisir.**

The publication of this volume created a great sensation, especially at court, where a number of the former mignons, such as Bellegarde, Epernon, etc., had preserved all their standing, without having to resort any more to a means so shameful; the pamphlet was denounced to the King, and an effort was made to obtain a public condemnation of the author. But Henri IV, after having had *Les Hermaphrodites* read to him, refused to have the author hunted down, although he found the work "too free and too bold," saying that it "was against his conscience to punish a man for having spoken the truth." It is Pierre de l'Estoile who repeats to us this fine speech of Henri IV, in which we are forced to see the confirmation of historic facts mentioned by the author of the *Hermaphrodites*. Who was this author? L'Estoile names Artus Thomas; it has been sought to prove that this was Thomas Artus, Sire of Embry, an obscure and high-flown *littérateur*. Sorel, in his *Bibliothèque Française*, tells us that this book, "in which was to be found so many good things," was attributed to the Cardinal du Perron. It makes little difference to us whose was the elegant and acerb pen responsible for this piece, which was reprinted with the following more explanatory title: *L'Isle des Hermaphrodites Nouvellement Descouverte, Avec les Mœurs, Loix, Coustumes et Ordonnances des Habits d'Icelle*.** This new title indicates that the author had taken upon himself the task of criticising especially the bizarre and indecent fashions of the court; these effeminate fashions are described, the truth is, so prolixly in the work, that we prefer to quote a passage of the *Tragiques*, in which D'Aubigné has summed up in very good verse a number of pages of the *Hermaphrodites*.

*Henry fut mieux instruit à juger des atours
Des putains de sa cour, plus propres aux amours:
Avoir ras le menton, garder la face pasle,
Le geste effeminé, l'oeil d'un Sardanapale,*

*Translator's Note:—Neither male nor female, I,
It is to know which one, I sigh;
To choose between them I am loath;
But after all, what difference?
Surely, there is no offense,
But greater pleasure in choosing both.

**Translator's Note:—"The Newly Discovered Island of Hermaphrodites, with the Manners, Laws, Customs and Costume-Regulations of the Said Island."

Si bien qu'un jour des Rois, ce douteux animal,
Sans cervelle, sans front, parut tel en son bal:
De cordons emperlez sa chevelure pleine,
Sous un bonnet sans bord, fait à l'italienne,
Faisoit deux arcs routéz; son menton pinceté,
Son visage de rouge et de blanc empasté,
Son chef tout empoudré, nous monstrèrent l'idée,
En la place d'un roy, d'une putain fardée.
Pensez quel beau spectacle! et comme il fit bon voir
Ce prince avec un busc, un corps de satin noir
Coupe à l'espagnole, ou des dechiquetures
Sortoient des passemens et des blanches tirures,
Et afin que l'habit s'entresuivist de rang,
Il monstroit des manchons gauffrés de satin blanc,
D'autres manches encor qui s'estendoient fendues,
Et puis jusques aux pieds d'autres manches perdues.
Pour nouveau parement, il porta, tout ce jour,
Cet habit monstrueux, pareil à son amour;
Si qu'au premier abord chacun estoit en peine
*S'il voyoit un roy-femme ou bien un homme-reine!**

The author of the *Hermaphrodites* spares us no details regarding the shameful costumes of his characters, their refinements of luxury and

Translator's Note:—

Henry was schooled in judging the attire
 Of the harlots of his court, to fan love's fire:
 Shaved neck, pale face, gestures effeminate,
 The eye of Sardanapalus the Great—
 Indeed, one day this doubtful animal,
 No head or forehead, came thus to a ball:
 His hair with pearly ornaments did shake
 Under a bonnet of Italian make,
 Two ribboned arches on his throat, laced tight,
 His face all smeared with rouge and pasty white,
 With powdered locks, looking less like a king
 To the vulgar gaze than some rouged whorish thing.
 A pretty sight it was, indeed, to see
 This prince in busk and satin frippery
 Cut in the Spanish style, with dainty vent
 Under white fissures and the passement,
 And, finally to suit his royal rank,
 He forthright in white satin muff did swank,
 With sleeves, also, some fluted and some slit,—
 Oh, if there was a dandy, he was it!
 And as a novelty, he wore all day
 This habit monstrous as his amorous play:
 One did not know when such a sight was seen,
 If it were woman-king or manly queen!

their coquetry; but he is very sober in the information he gives, and even in his allusions to the subject of their manners, which leads us to think that there exist certain lacunae in the text. It is easy to picture the secret acts of the officers of the *Hermaphrodite*, in that chamber which was called "the altar of Antinoüs, for the reason that the tapestry represented the loves of Adrian and Antinoüs," or in that gallery where were painted on the frescoes "the lascivious occupations of Sardanapalus and the meditations of Aretino, along with the metamorphoses of the gods and other such numberless representations very lively and naturally represented." We may readily conceive also all that the author has omitted to say, or all that has been cut out by his printer, when we remark, in the gallery dedicated to the legislators of debauchery, "a number of broken chairs, which might be lengthened, enlarged, lowered, or heightened, by means of a spring, as one desired; this was an hermaphroditic invention newly discovered in that country." The judgment of Henri IV, who found this work "too free and too bold," while recognizing that it was true, has no need of being justified by citations. This one quotation, however, drawn from the ordinances relating to the policing of the hermaphrodites, leaves no doubt as to the principal object which the author had in view in this mordant satire on the mignons: "And inasmuch as all the beds are altars where we would that a perpetual sacrifice be made to the goddess Salambona, we desire that they shall be as rich as the rest, clothed and caparisoned for the use of the most secret friends; knowing also that the actions of the vulgar are committed under a sky called lunar, while the mysteries of Venus are elevated by two degrees above them, we propose that each shall have a double sky in his bed, and that he who is within shall not be less rich than he who is without; we desire that a history be made of the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, disguises of the gods, and other similar things, to encourage the colder ones; that the rear shall be more remarkable than the front, for its size, as being more convenient to hermaphrodites, being the proper place for their intercourse. And since also the earth is not worthy of bearing a thing so precious, we ordain that there shall be spread under the said beds a few rich *cairins* (rugs of Cairo) or other tapestries of silk." The author merely touches on his subject, with a delicacy which bears witness to the horror inspired in him by the life of the courtiers, and he avows that he turned away with disgust from "those who played and frolicked" (*ceux qui jouoient et folastroient*), "from fear of

seeing," he says, "something which would, peradventure, not have been very agreeable to me."

It is necessary to come back to the writings of Agrippa d'Aubigné for the most characteristic descriptions of the Prostitution of the mignons. The grave and judicious De Thou has not deigned to introduce into his History some of the anecdotes which are to be found even in the *Confession de Sancy*: that of the *Sarbacane*, for example, proves at least that the King was not so hardened in vice that he was incapable of remorse. It was about the year 1580 that Saint-Luc and Joyeuse, ashamed and tired of their condition, desired to be free of it by making their master blush for his debaucheries, which they themselves could no longer contemplate save with an invincible repugnance. In accordance with the advice of the Countess of Retz, whom they both loved, they pierced the wall of Henri III's closet and "ran through the side of the bed, between the counterpane and the curtains, a bronze air-tube (*sarbacane*), by means of which they planned to counterfeit an angel," according to the account which D'Aubigné gives of the adventure (*Hist. Universelle*, Book II, Chapter V, Volume III); the plan was to convey into the ear of the King the warnings and threats of Heaven, in order to correct his hideous habits. The strata-gem succeeded beyond the hopes of Saint-Luc and Joyeuse, for Henri III had no sooner heard the mysterious voice summoning him to mend his ways, under pain of being thunderstruck like the perverse inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, than he swore not to fall back any more into his sin and to bring his mignons to repentance. The poor sinner became so frightened that at the least clap of thunder, he would run to hide under his bed, and if the lightning kept up, he would flee to the caves of the Louvre. But Joyeuse took pity on the King's deplorable state, and, to cure him of his terrors, confessed everything, accusing Saint-Luc. The latter had time to flee before the King's wrath could reach him, and took refuge in the city of Brussels, of which he was governor, abjuring forever his heresies as a mignon. De Thou reports the same adventure, but he assigns as Saint-Luc's accomplice François d'O, in place of Joyeuse, and he attributes to the wife of Saint-Luc, who was Jeanne de Cossé-Brissac, the invention of the *sarbacane*. Later, despite the stigma originally attaching to his name, the ex-mignon, François d'Epinay, Seigneur de Saint-Luc became grand master of the artillery and Marshal of France under the reign of Henri IV. "This poor lad had a horror of this villainy," says

Agrippa d'Aubigné, in the *Confession de Sancy*, "and was forced the first time, the King causing him to take a look in a box, while the grand prior and Camille passed the lid over his loins, this being known as taking the hare in the trap (*prendre le lièvre au colet*).^{*} and so, it may be seen, this honest man was put to the trade by force." The dishonor of the unfortunate favorite was conveyed to the court by this smutty anagram, which Rochepot had found in the name of Saint-Luc: *cats in c.* . . .

The angel of the *sarbacane* had left in the King's mind a salutary tendency to fear the chastisements of God: hence, those processions, those penances, those solemn expiations. But we hesitate to believe that, as D'Aubigné tells us, "fear is one of the exquisite artifices of voluptuaries;" we repel with horror those monstrous calumnies, which the Leaguers, rather than the Huguenots, had distilled like a frightful poison, with the object of annihilating royalty by stigmatizing the King. It is hard to understand how D'Aubigné could obstinately repeat these indignities, in his *Tragiques*, in his *Histoire Universelle* and in his *Confession de Sancy*. He might have left to the pamphlets of the League those rosaries from Rome, those blessed beads which the King distributed to all the *confrères du cabinet*, ordering them that "their pleasures should be practiced with the said chaplets;" that "sacred" mass,^{**} which was said at the head of the King's bed and which was marked by "ornaments accommodated to this sin;" those "*lavemens d'eschine*" and those clysters of holy water which the mignons employed in the guise of a preservative against the fire of Heaven! Sauval, in his historic and secret memoirs on the loves of the kings of France, does not hesitate, in the face of the hideous profanations alleged by D'Aubigné, to take up the defense of Henri III: "All those abominations of Gomorrah," he says, "on which he was brought up, and which his satyr companions termed *amours sacrées*, as excluding the love of women, were the vices of the great ones, and especially of his favorites, known as the *sacrée société* and the *bande sacrée*, rather than his own. Thus, it was of them and of that monstrous lechery in which they delighted, that it was said in those days: *In Spania, los cavalieros; in Francia, los grandes; in Alemania, pocos; in*

^{*}*Translator's Note*.—See Aretino, *I Ragionamenti*, First Part, First Day, the story entitled "Convent Sports," in my translation (p. 71): "And then, the big clown, setting about to hunt the hare in the hedge," etc. The figure was a common one.

^{**}*Translator's Note*.—The "black mass" theme again.

Italia, todos.”* And yet, we must accept as true a part of the statements in the *Confession de Sancy*, however infamous they may appear, and we are not to confound with the ignoble pamphleteers of the League the brave and loyal Agrippa d’Aubigne, who was the friend and companion in arms of the King, even when he exclaimed with a profound feeling of indignation: “If I were to tell what was said to me in secret of the Prince of Condé, when they were for one whole night very content with the apprenticeship of the Count of Aubergne; or if I were to relate the banishment of young Rosny for being poorly furnished (*mal garny*); of Noailles for having written over his bed these verses:

*Nul heur, nul bien ne me contente
Absent de ma divinité!***

to which the King of Navarre set his hand:

*N’appelle pas ainsi ma tante
Elle aime trop humanité.****

by which it is seen that he loved women, against the rules of “sacred love,” which caused him to be kicked out (*le fit chasser à coups de pied*) like the Duke of Longueville, for having demanded of the King his colors in a letter on illuminated paper; if I were to relate the nuptials of Quélus, the contract signed with the King’s blood and that of D’O as witnesses, by which he was married to Monsieur Le Grand; moreover, if I were to give the words of this grief-stricken Prince on the death of Maugrion, with his mouth glued between the two shameful parts! . . .” (See, in the *Confession de Sancy*, Chapter VII on the relics and devotions of the late King.)

When D’Aubigne wrote, in facetious form, these horrible revelations concerning the secret history of the Louvre, he had already been condemned to death two or three times for contumacy as an incorrigible Huguenot. He was in high favor at the court of Henri IV; he wore a gray beard which covered his neck, and he still felt boiling in his veins the implacable hatred inspired in him by vice which wore a crown; but more than thirty years before, when, during the wars of 1577, he was residing at Casteljaloux, commanding some light cavalry of the

**Translator’s Note*:—“In Spain, the knights; in France, the great ones; in Germany, a few; in Italy, all.”

***Translator’s Note*:—“No season and no blessing satisfies me, absent from my divinity.”

****Translator’s Note*:—“Do not thus invoke my aunt; she loves humanity too well.”

Protestant army, he, "regarding himself as dead of wounds received in the great combat," had formulated, almost in the same terms, the same accusations against Henri IV and the latter's courtezans, in the *Tragiques*, which were not published until twenty-five years later. It was then on a sick bed and facing approaching death that he vowed to the execration of posterity the hideous deeds and gestures of the mignons and their royal master. Following is the manner in which the poet paved the way for the historian:

*Quand j'oy qu'un roy transy, effraïé du tonnerre,
Se couvre d'une voute et se cache sous terre,
S'embusque de laurier, fait les cloches sonner;
Son peché, poursuivy, poursuit de l'estonner;
Qu'il use d'eau lustrale, il la boit, la consomme
En clystères infects; il fait venir de Rome
Les cierges, les agnus, que le pape fournit;
Bouche tous ses conduits d'un charmé grain-benit;
Quand je voy composer une messe complete,
Pour repousser le ciel, inutile amulette;
Quand la peur n'a cessé, par les signes de croix,
Le braïer de Massé ny le froc de François:
Tels spectres inconnus font confesser le reste;
Le peché de Sodome et le sanglant inceste
Sont reproches joyeux de nos impures cours.
Triste, je trancheray ce tragique discours,
Pour laisser aux pasquils ces effroyables contes,
Honteuses veritez, trop veritables hontes!**

*Translator's Note:—

When I hear a king, fright-chilled by thunder-clap,
Takes refuge underground as from a trap,
Puts laurel on his head and tolls the bell
As though it were his sin's pursuing knell,
Drinks lustral water in the clyster's soil,
From Rome brings candles as the Pope's own foil,
Agni and other spells to fit his needs,
Mouths all his conduits with holy beads,
Composing a mass complete to pay his debt.
Restraining heaven with an amulet,
And when not even Holy Cross's sign,
Masses' nor François' garments very fine
Can stop his fright, while spectres do the rest
And sin of Sodom, bloodiest incest
Make him confess: these joys of our court
Do sadden me and cause me to cut short
This tragic tale, better left without a name,
The shameful truth and the too truthful shame!

CHAPTER LXXVI

ONE could not better depict the state of manners of the court at the end of the 16th century than by giving a picture of the disorderly private life of Marguerite of Valois, Queen of Navarre, first wife of Henri IV, and by setting down a few facts concerning the amours of her husband, amours immortalized under the name of the *Grand Alcandre*. This pair took pains mutually to unveil their secret adulteries, the Queen, in her *Mémoires*, where she enumerates, with much reserve and delicacy always, her griefs against a fitful and unfaithful spouse; the King in the famous *Divorce Satyrique*, that statement which he caused to be drawn up by Agrippa d'Aubigné or some other to serve as a set of instructions to the commissioners named to examine into the causes of separation which might exist between the royal pair. These two authentic fragments of the divorce suit were not printed until a long time afterward; but they were circulated in manuscript from the moment they were produced in connection with the case. They served to prove, in the most scandalous fashion, that the King of Navarre and his wife had no right to reproach each other in the matter of profligacy and incontinence; this was, moreover, but the ordinary *train* of the court; and when the Princess of Conti wrote, in the form of a romance, the *Amours du Grand Alcandre*, which completed the *Mémoires* of Marguerite of Valois, she did not feel that she was breaking the laws of fine gallantry by offering these examples of debauchery and depravity to the young nobility of France.

It would be difficult to review all the misdemeanors of Queen Marguerite, from the time of her precocious entrance upon a career of Prostitution, at the age of eleven years, when "D'Entragues and Charins (for each believed that he was the first to obtain that glory) had the first fruits of her warmth," as Henri IV himself says, in the *Divorce Satyrique*. We have already reported elsewhere, with none too great a confidence, the odious rumors which were current during the reign of Charles IX on the subject of the incestuous relations of Queen Margot with her three brothers; we shall not speak here of her first lovers, nor of Colonel Martigues, who loved her so distractedly that he always carried with him, even into the most dangerous sieges and skirmishes, an embroidered scarf and a little dog which she had

given him as souvenirs; nor of the Duke of Guise, who "thought to come, through his immodest kisses, at something more;" nor of La Mole, who was decapitated in the Place de Grève, along with Coconas, whose heart and certain relics still more strange were preserved in golden boxes; nor of Saint-Luc, whose "frequent and nocturnal consolations she received as she wept for her former lover;" nor of Bussy, who, however brave he may have been, had the reputation of being "none to brave with the ladies, on account of a certain colic which ordinarily took him at midnight." The *Divorce Satyrique* goes on to cite, among those who obtained the favors of the Princess, the Duke of Mayenne, "good fellow, big and fat, and as voluptuous as she;" the Viscount of Turenne, whom she speedily dismissed, "finding his figure disproportionate in a certain place;" Lebole, who in an access of jealousy ate the feathers off his hat; Clermant d'Amboise, who carressed her "only in her petticoat at the door of her bedroom," while the King of Navarre, of an evening, was gaming or promenading with his officers in the great hall; the "old ruffian" (*vieux rufien*) of a Pibrac "who had been appointed love's chancellor;" and finally, the Seigneur Harlay de Champvalon, who had himself carried to the Louvre in a wooden box in order to be able to enter his mistress' closet at night.

We have made haste to arrive at the scandal which accompanied the departure of the Queen of Navarre, when she left Paris and the court, at the order of the King her brother, to return to Gascony, to her husband's side. Henri III was very irritated against her, for the liaison of the Princess with Champvalon had borne its fruits, and a child who, it was said, had resulted from this liaison, had disappeared immediately after its birth. Champvalon was prudently retired to Germany, when the pregnancy of Marguerite began to be suspected. It was reported that the adulterous infant had been smothered, cut into bits and hurled into a privy; but it was learned later that he had been reared under the name of Louis de Vaux by the concierge of the Hôtel de Navarre, and that he was looked upon as being the son of a court-perfumer. However this may be, Henri III, having commanded his sister to depart, the latter regretfully obeyed and entered upon the journey on Monday, the 23d of August, 1583, with certain persons of her household. She arrived by evening at Palaiseau, to sleep there; but the King had caused her to be followed by sixty archers of his guard, and there captured. The Sieur de l'Archant, executing secret orders,

"came to seek her even in her bed," says Pierre de l'Estoile, "and to take prisoners the lady of Duras and the damoiselle of Béthune, who were accused of incontinence and abortions." The Seigneur of Lodon, gentleman of the Queen of Navarre, was arrested as well as the squire, the secretary, the physician and other officers of this Princess; they were led to Montargis, where the King himself interrogated them "on the deportment of the said Queen, his sister, also upon the child which it was rumored she had had since her coming to the court." But this interrogatory and the inquiry which was the result of it brought nothing to light, and all those who were arrested were given their liberty. Marguerite was then free to continue her journey to Nérac, where her husband was. The King of Navarre did not care to take her again, on account of the scandal accompanying the whole affair. There were no longer any relations between the Queen and her husband, who lived together under the same roof as though they were already separated by a divorce. Henri III endeavored to intervene, in order to affect at least an apparent reconciliation. In one of his letters to his brother-in-law he remarks to him maliciously: "You know how kings are subject to being deceived by false rumors, and that the most virtuous princesses are not exempt from calumny; even as regards the late Queen, your mother, you know how much talk, and always bad talk, there was about her." The King of Navarre burst out laughing, and addressing himself to M. de Bellièvre, who had brought him this fine letter: "The King," he said, "does me too much honor by all these letters: in the first, he calls me a cuckold (*cocu*), and in the latter 'son of a whore' (*filz de putain*). I thank him for it!"

The pair did not continue to live in any better accord, although the King of Navarre, for political reasons, made a pretense of having forgotten his grief: "He had taken back his wife in an apparently forgiving manner," says De l'Estoile, "and by reason of the command which His Majesty had laid upon him; but it was never possible to persuade him to sleep with her, even for one night, nor to caress her with pleasing words and a good face, at which the mother (Catherine de Medici) and the daughter were vastly enraged." De l'Estoile has effaced this passage in a later edition of his *Registre-Journal*, being content to leave there, under date of February, 1585, a phrase stating that Queen Marguerite was "very discontent with her husband, who neglected her, not having slept with her since the news of the affront which the King her brother had offered her in August, 1583." During

this interval, passed at the court of Nérac, the Queen, who appeared to be animated by a desire to mend her ways, led a life that was more respectable, "living with the shame of her sins," says the *Divorce Satyrique*; but finally, she grew tired of this enforced continence, and "let herself be carried away by the flesh and her own boundless sensuality." She abandoned the dwelling of the King, her husband, where she had been closely watched and guarded, by order of her brother, Henri III, and retired to the city of Agen, "there to set up shop, and, with greater freedom of conscience, to continue her filthy conduct." She did not remain there long; the inhabitants of the city, which belonged to the Catholic party, no sooner learned that the Queen of Navarre had arrived within their walls than they rose up to oblige her to leave. She then fled in haste: "Barely could there be found the crupper of a horse to bear her, nor horses to rent, nor post horses for the half of her maids, of whom a number followed her, some without cloaks, some without aprons, and some without either, in a disarray so pitiable that they rather resembled the lasses of the German foot soldiers (*lansquenetz*) upon breaking of camp than they did maids of a good house; accompanied by certain nobility, poorly equipped, who, half without boots and half on foot, led her, under the guard of Lignerac, in the mountains of Auvergne in Carlat." Henri III, having learned of his sister's flight, was very irritated at it, and remarked in a loud voice to his courtiers: "The cadets of Gascony are not able to defile the Queen of Navarre enough; she has left them to seek out the muleteers and braziers of Auvergne!"

The poor Marguerite, in the course of the journey from Agen to Carlat, took the crupper behind a gentleman (see the *Scaligerana*, under the word Navarre). "She rubbed all the skin off her rump, of which she was ill for a month, and had the fever." The physician who treated her "had the stirrups (i. e., was given a thrashing) for having talked too much," according to the *Dictionnaire Général et Curieux* of César de Rochefort (page 415, column 1). Which authorizes us to suppose that this "*écorchure*" of the Queen's rump was of suspicious origin. The Queen of Navarre, if we are to believe the *Divorce Satyrique*, suffered greatly from want in the Château de Carlat, "where she was, for long, not only without dais or litter, but also without chemises for every day use." She consoled herself by yielding to every whim of temperament in this château, "which was more like a den of thieves than the dwelling of a Princess, the maid, wife and sister of the King."

She was unable to renew as often as she liked, her gallant personnel, found herself circumscribed in her choice of lovers. In the absence of the Seigneur de Duras, "whom she had sent to the King of Spain in quest of money," she cast eyes successively on Choisin, one of the musicians of her suite, then on her cook, then on Saint-Vincent, her maître d'hôtel, then on Aubiac, "the best groomed of her domestics, whom she brought from the stables to the bedrooms." This Aubiac had been greatly taken with her upon seeing her for the first time seven or eight years before. "I would have slept with her then," he exclaimed loudly, looking upon her with eyes inflamed with love, "even under pain of being hanged a short while afterwards!" In speaking thus, he was casting his own horoscope. Although he was but a "churlish squire, red haired and more speckled than a trout, 'with a nose of scarlet hue, a most unprepossessing knave, in short, he nevertheless was one day found in bed with a Daughter of France, at Carlat by Madame de Marze, who, from rising too early, made this fine discovery; and after having been the Princess' favorite, he was made a prisoner in the Château of Ivry, where the latter had taken refuge upon her flight from Carlat. The King of France, irritated at his sister, had ordered the Marquis of Canillac to take charge of her; for Marguerite, a number of years since had embraced the League, in order to avenge herself at once on her brother and her husband. The Queen was then removed to the Château of Usson, in Auvergne, where the Marquis of Canillac was charged with keeping her a prisoner, while her latest lover, the unfortunate Aubiac, was led away to Aigueperse, there to be judged. He was condemned, as a Leaguer, to be hanged, and went to his fate kissing a "sleeve of blue satin which was all that remained to him of the benefits of his lady." But already Marguerite had given him a successor, for the Marquis of Canillac had permitted himself to be seduced by his prisoner. He became, however far from good-looking he may have been, "as well gotten up and dashing as a young village swain." The Queen did not love him, but she pretended to love him, and he, jealous of all rivals whom he might suspect neglected the King's service for that of his enchantress. The latter managed so well with her ruses and her artifices, that it was not long before she conceived a pretext to disembarass herself of her amorous jailor, seizing the château from his hands while he was absent. Upon his return, the Marquis of Canillac found the gates closed, and Marguerite informed him that she had no further need of a

governor. He left Usson with a sigh and became a laughing stock at the court of Henri III, who, however, pardoned him for having so poorly fulfilled his mission, in view of the discomfiture which he had undergone. The only vengeance the King took was to remark to Canillac: "Why did you not ask permission of Queen Margot to become her perfumer?"

The fortress of Usson, built upon a point of rock, was inexpugnable. Henri IV had no idea of besieging his wife; he was satisfied with the fact that she was a captive, although a sovereign within this species of prison. She remained for more than twenty years in this mysterious asylum of debaucheries. One of the panegyrists of this princess, Père Hilarion de Coste, in his *Éloges des Dames Illustres*, has no hesitancy in telling us, in rhetorical style, that "this redoubtable château of Auvergne was a Tabor for her devotions, a Lebanon for her solitude, an Olympus for her exercises, a Parnassus for her muses, and a Caucasus for her afflictions." Bayle remarks, with reason, that the Queen of Navarre's sojourn at Usson might more justly have been compared to the retreat of Tiberius on the island of Capri. It is certain, moreover, that the voluptuous siren of Usson was clever enough to hide so well from profane eyes the immodest mysteries which took place in the interior of her château, where no strange foot ever entered, that the eyes and ears of the public were able to hear or see nothing. All that took place behind those thick walls escaped the curiosity and the censure of the ones without. Those in the neighborhood did not even suspect the manner of life which was led in this inaccessible retreat, all echoes of which were silent as soon as Marguerite had left the place. Following is the manner in which a grave and honorable man, Jean Darnalt, King's procurator at the seat of Agen, deluded himself as to the manners and habits of the lady of the place: "It is a thing very true," he says, in his *Antiquitéz d'Agen* (printed at Paris in 1606, following his *Remonstrance au Harangue Solennelle Faite aux Ouvertures des Plaidoyers, d'après Saint Luc, en la Senechaussée d'Agen*), "it is very true that Her Majesty very closely observed there a laudable custom. After having recreated herself moderately in the exercises of the Muses, she would remain most of the time retired in her chapel, making prayers to God, full of ardor, communicating once or twice a week." The worthy magistrate, who certainly possessed a strong faith in his paranymph, would not have dared write, or above all publish anything, if he had suspected the truth; for

the praises which he addresses the Queen strongly resemble pleasures, and Marguerite must have had a good laugh with her mignons when Darnalt read to her very seriously the following morsel of eloquence: "Phoenix, who are reborn daily from your own ashes, burning and consuming yourself in divine love . . . , you live another life than is lived in the world! . . . holy hermitage, monastery devout, where Her Majesty devotes all her zeal to meditation, tending only to the end of ends, to the one sovereign end; rock which is a witness of voluntary solitude, very praiseworthy and religious, on the part of this Princess, for it seems, from the sweet music and the harmonious songs of the most beautiful voice in France, that paradise can be nowhere else than where Her Majesty savors that contentment and repose of mind which the souls of the blessed know in the other world!"

We do not possess, unfortunately, the counterpart of this incredible panegyric; there are in the *Divorce Satyrique*, but a few unimportant lines concerning Marguerite's stay at Usson. When she had expelled the Marquis of Canillac from this chateau, "she resolved to obey nothing any more save her own will," says Henri IV in the *Divorce Satyrique*, "and to set up on this rock the empire of her delights, where, shut in by three walls and with all the great gates barred, as God and all France knows, she indulged in many fine sports and made them popular. The *Nanna* of Aretino and his *Santa* are nothing by comparison." But after this beginning, which promises singular revelations, the King's statements gives us scarcely any information at all concerning those "fine sports" which so long occupied the Lady of Usson, and which replaced for her the dreams of ambition and the pleasures of pride. We may conclude, nevertheless, with certainty, from the very silence which history has preserved regarding the details of this long retreat, that the illustrious recluse lived in the midst of the most monstrous dissoluteness: "It is true," says her royal spouse on this subject, "that in place of the gallants who had sweetened her past life, she was there reduced, for lack of better, to her domestics, secretaries, choristers and waifs of nobility, whom, by force of gifts, she attracted to her, whose rank and names, unknown to her very neighbors, are unworthy of my memory." Henri IV cites but one, who gives us the measure of all the others, one who enjoyed a more brilliant reign than the others on account of the criminal love which he had been able to inspire in his mistress: "It is he who, she says, changes body, voice, face and skin, as it seems to her, and who enters

closed doors where it pleases him; it was for him that she had the beds of her ladies of Usson made so high that one might see under them without bending, in order not to have to wear the skin off her shoulders and buttocks, as she had been wont, by going down on all fours to look for him; it was for him that she was frequently to be seen groping the tapestries, thinking there to find him, and very often, in looking for him with too great an affection, she marked her face against the doors and walls; it was for him that you have heard our courtly voices singing these verses, made by herself:

*A ces bois, ces prez et ces antres,
Offrons les vœux, les pleurs, les sons,
La plume, les vœux, les chansons
D'un poëte, d'un amant, d'un chanteur.**

Allusion, as a matter of fact, is to a chorister named Pomony or Comines, son of a coppersmith of Auvergne, who had nothing remarkable about him except his "ugliness" and his fine voice; he was at first a choir-boy in the village church, before being received into the Queen's chapel, Her Majesty cleaning him up a bit in order to make him her secretary and favorite. She was taken with him to the point of madness, and attributed to a magic charm her violent passion, which sometimes took on the form of a raging dementia. Henri IV remarked that he sometimes could not keep from laughing at the "extravagant jealousies and strong passions which she displayed in her amours, passions which frequently transported her to a state where she was led to condemn what she saw and to believe she was what was not; at which times, furious in her sensual warmth, she would seek her ruffians in all the most isolated parts of her house, although she could not but know that they were in another part; and upon beholding them, she would be persuaded that others under their image were seeking to deceive her and do her wrong."

It was this which led to the belief that the Queen, in her amorous transports, was the slave of a sorcerer, who stifled in her the sentiment of modesty; it was less the follies in which she indulged than the strange amulets which she always wore upon her person that led to this belief. There was a story that she kept in golden boxes the hearts

**Translator's Note:—In these woods, these fields and dells
Offer our vows, our tears, day-long,
Poet's pen and lover's song,
Weave they here their magic spells.*

of her dead lovers, as relics of her amours, and this rumor was in a manner confirmed by the quantity of *cassolettes* and jewels in the form of hearts which she carried loose in her pockets or wore attached to her girdle. These undoubtedly were but perfumes in boxes of goldsmith work. And yet, while she resided at Usson, she ordinarily wore suspended from her neck, between her chemise and the flesh, a purse of blue silk, "in which *her most privy friends* had discovered a silver box, the engraved superficies of which naïvely contained (among various other and unknown characters) a portrait on one side and her copper-smith on the other." We are authorized to suppose that this silver box was not a sorcerer's talisman, but rather a love-charm; we are also inclined to identify this talisman with the one which Brantôme, in his *Dames Galantes*, has a lady of the court, whom he does not name, wear: "Her husband being dead, she cut off his parts from the front and the middle, so loved by her of yore, and embalmed them, odoriferizing them with perfumes and with powders of musk, very odoriferous, and afterwards she enclosed them in a box of gilded silver, which she guarded and preserved as a thing very precious." According to tradition, the truth is, Marguerite of Valois not only had, herself, cut off the head of her dear La Mole, whom she had been unable to save from his fate, but she had, with her own hands, mutilated the cadaver, which had been divided into four quarters and placed upon pikes on the four corners of the Place de Grève; the head was interred at night, by the pious hands of this desolated sweetheart, in the chapel of Saint-Martin; the heart and other relics, filched from the body of the victim, were embalmed and placed in boxes of gold and silver, which the Queen wore in the guise of jewels and reliquaries, throughout the course of all her following amours, which but served, as she said, to revive the memory of the former one. "She wore," relates Tallemant des Réaux, who was in a position to know all, "a great farthingale, which had little pockets all about it, in which she placed the box in which was the heart of one of her dead lovers; for she was careful, as soon as they had died, to have the heart embalmed. This farthingale hung every night from a steelyard, locked with padlocks, behind the back of her bed." (See the *Historiettes* of Tallement des Réaux, second edition of M. de Monmerqué, Volume I, page 163.)

The historian Dupleix, whom Marguerite had attached to her house in the quality of *maître des requêtes*, "an honest appointment," as he himself says, did not think it necessary to throw a cloak over the

misdeameans of this Princess, when he came to speak of her in the *Histoire de Henri IV*; nevertheless, he threw a discreet veil over that Prostitution, of which he had been a witness for twenty years: "All the world publishing her as a goddess," he says in the *Histoire de Louis XIII* (page 53), "she imagined that she was one, and for that reason took pleasure all her life in being named Venus Uranios, that is to say, *heavenly*, not so much to show that she shared the goddess' divinity, as to distinguish her love from that of the vulgar, for she had another method of loving than that of other women, pretending especially that it was more to be practiced by the mind than by the body, and this word was frequently in her mouth: 'Would you cease loving? Possess the thing you love!' I could make of all this a romance more excellent and more admirable than has ever been composed in preceding centuries, but I have more serious occupations."

Dupleix justifies himself for having revealed, or rather for having permitted to be divined, the Queen's incontinence, by declaring that he is not writing panegyrics for princes and princesses, but "a true history, which should express their virtues and not suppress their vices, to the end that their successors, fearing a similar brand upon their memory, may imitate their praiseworthy actions and flee their evil ones." But he was generally blamed, and Bassompierre made himself the trumpet of this blame in his *Remarques* on the work of Dupleix, where he indulges in an interpolation on this subject in accents of contempt and indignation. "Infamous viper, who by your calumny tear out the entrails of the one who has given you life! Vermin, who eat the very flesh which had procreated you! . . . What shame do you do to France in publishing to all the world and leaving to posterity accounts so infamous of one of the noblest Princesses of the blood-royal,—things which may be false, or, if not, were known to but a few persons?"

Bassompierre, in thus taking up in so lively a fashion Marguerite's defense, avows that those calumnies for which he reproaches Dupleix may have been merely slanders and indiscretions; but Dupleix had merely repeated, with an extreme reserve, what was being said everywhere, at the court and among the people, ever since the Queen of Navarre had left her enchanted château of Usson, in 1605, to return to Paris to take up her residence there; her hysterical or hypochondriac state had become such that the scandals thereby engendered were the talk and the astonishment of all France. "This weakness,"

says Dupleix, "appeared at the beginning only in certain details known to her domestics; but after her last trip to the court, they were but only too thoroughly divulged, she herself making them known to all the world."

Whatever may have been the notoriety accompanying the misdemeanors of Queen Marguerite, Brantôme, who had also been one of her domestics, and who preserved his respect and admiration for her, does not permit himself, in the manner of Dupleix, to betray the secrets surrounding the Princess' private conduct. If he relates, in his *Dames Galantes*, possibly with Marguerite's own connivance, a number of facts sufficiently equivocal concerning her, embodying information which he had received directly and in confidence from the Venus Uranios, he is, none the less, very careful not to name her, and he frequently takes the precaution to side-track the reader by modifying various details of his narrative. The notice which he devotes to Marguerite in the *Vies des Femmes Illustres* is a resplendent panegyric, in which the author does not admit the shadow of gallantry, as though his object were to oppose this brilliant eulogy to the *Divorce Satyrique*, which was current at court about that time. Thus, Brantôme avoids refuting one by one the accusations which the author of the *Divorce Satyrique* had accumulated in this factum against Marguerite's morals; he attacks not only this difficult and delicate thesis, but hurls himself unreservedly into laudatory generalities, and sets himself almost exclusively the task of placing in relief those seductive charms which had always been characteristic of the Queen: "There," he says, "is a Princess who, in everything, exceeds the commonplaceness of all others in the world!" Brantôme takes pleasure in portraying that marvelous beauty, that incomparable grace, that exquisite taste in the toilet, that wealth of figure, that nobleness of mien and all the other external perfections which drew from one honest gentleman, a newcomer at the court, the remark that: "I am not astonished if you gentlemen are so fond of yourselves here at court; for when you have no other pleasure every day except to look upon that beautiful Princess, you have as much as if you were in an earthly Paradise." The author of the *Divorce Satyrique*, among the cruel epigrams which he addresses to the already repudiated spouse of Henri IV, indulged, perhaps, in no remarks more offensive to the *amour propre* of woman than are to be found in two or three passages where he does not hesitate to attack a beauty which age has not spared. It is these insulting

passages which Brantôme chiefly endeavored to combat and to efface, as they alone closely touched Marguerite's honor. The pamphleteer had reproached the Queen with rouging and powdering herself beyond measure, in order to hide her wrinkles. Brantôme adroitly recalls a comparison which he had made of this Queen to the beauteous Aurora, "when she is born, before the day, with her beautiful white face and surrounded by vermillion hues." The pamphleteer had indulged in exceedingly coarse jocosities relative to the indecent exhibition which Marguerite made of her throat: Brantôme, without alluding to a reproach which fell less upon the Queen than upon the fashions of her times, approves and glorifies those nudities, which he did not look upon with the same eye as did Henri IV: "Her beautiful accoutrements and fine adornments," he says, "never dared to undertake the task of covering her beautiful throat nor her handsome breast, fearing to wrong the sight of the world by depriving it of so fine an object; for never had there been seen one so splendid nor so full of charm, so full nor so plump, which she showed so fully and so without concealment that the majority of courtiers perished at the sight, to say nothing of the ladies, some of whom I have seen (among them her most privy friends) kiss it, with her permission, with a great ravishment." Brantôme, old and infirm at that time, had remained faithful to the service of his ancient mistress, who in a letter written to him from Usson, transmits to him in these terms, the expressions of an unalterable affection: "I know that, like me, you have chosen the tranquil life, which I esteem a happy one for the one who can keep to it, as God has given me the grace to do for five years past, having lodged me in an ark of salvation, where the storms of trouble, *Dieu mercy!* cannot come at me; but if there remain any means by which I may serve my friends, and you, in particular, you shall find me entirely disposed and of good will."

Queen Marguerite, satisfied with the "tranquil life" which she was leading in her "ark of safety," would hardly have protested against the breaking off of her marriage with the King, had she not feared to see the crown of France go to Gabrielle d'Estrées, whom she detested, not as a rival worthy of herself, but as an enemy fatal to royalty; she refused thus to be an accomplice in the intentions and circumventions of Henri IV, who had formulated a request for divorce before the court of Rome; but Gabrielle, dying suddenly, undoubtedly of poison, on the 10th of April, 1599, Marguerite at once consented to a divorce.

"I have indulged in procrastinations," she wrote to Sully, on the 29th of July; "you know the reason as well as any other, how I did not wish to see in my place such a baggage, whom I esteem unworthy of possessing it." She herself presented to Pope Clement VIII a request conformable to that of the King, and she exhibited no rancor toward Henri IV for the discourteous means he had employed to obtain a divorce in spite of her. She forgave the outrages contained in the *Divorce Satyrique*, as well as those in the interrogatory which the Pope's commissioners had compelled her to undergo. She smiled with great good humor upon learning of her husband's reply to the Cardinal de Joyeuse, when His Eminence inquired if they had ever had "intercourse together" (*communication ensemble*): "We were both very young on the day of our wedding, and each of us was so lecherous that it was impossible for us to refrain." She had never loved Henri IV, whom she accused of smelling under the armpits (*gousset*) and of having malodorous feet. The King, on the other hand, was so full of the memories which she had bequeathed him that he exclaimed, upon learning that she had given her full consent to a divorce: "Ah! the poor woman, she knows well enough that I have always loved and honored her, though she did not me, and that it was her bad deportment which caused our separation, so long ago, one from another!" (See the *Mem. et Anecd. des Reines et Régents de France*, by Dreux du Radier, Volume V.) Marguerite pretended that the good of France had determined her to break a union which could not assure an heir to the crown, and she was the first to applaud the King's marriage to Maria de' Medici.

She was still, at this period, under the spell of a new love, which she had formed in Pominy's absence. It may be presumed that she herself had hastened the departure of this Pominy, for whom she no longer cared, but who came back later to claim his rights with so much brutality that she was obliged to chastise him, remarking that the wicked fellow was ruining all her servants. Pominy's first successor was a little "valet of Provence," named Julien Date, whom she had made a noble "with six ells of cloth," under the name of Saint-Julien. She had left him at Usson, when she decided to repair to court after twenty-four years of voluntary exile. It was in the month of August, 1605, that she suddenly arrived at Paris and took up her quarters at the Hôtel de Sens, near the Arsenal. The day following her arrival, these four verses were found written up over the door of this hôtel, which belonged to the Archbishop of Sens:

*Comme roïne tu devrois estre
 En ta royale maison;
 Comme putain, c'est bien raison
 Que tu sois au logis d'un prestre.**

"It was thus," according to the *Divorce Satyrique*, that "a *fourrier*, who knew what he was about, branded her hostelry." But she lodged there only a few days, when, to silence all the rumors which her sudden return had given rise to, by awakening, as Pierre de l'Estoile says, the "curious minds," she went to pass six weeks at the Château de Madrid, in the Bois de Boulogne. Henri IV had seen her once more with pleasure, and they were so thoroughly reconciled that "the King had requested of her two things; first, that, in order the better to preserve her health, she would discontinue her custom of turning night into day and day into night; the other that she would restrain her liberalities and become a better husbandwoman." Henri IV frequently gave her marks of his affection and interest. He visited her from time to time and amused himself by conversing freely with her; but when he had returned to the Louvre, it was his custom to remark, jestingly, "that he had come back from the brothel." (*Mém et Journaux* of Pierre de l'Estoile, under the reign of Henri IV, edition of MM. Champollion, page 425.) Queen Marguerite, in taking up her residence at Paris, probably had conceived the plan of changing her life and renouncing gallantry; "but," says the impitiable author of the *Divorce Satyrique*, "not being able to do without a male any longer, lamenting the time lost and not desiring to remain idle," she sent to Usson for this Date or Saint-Julien, "so many times sought out during her periods of pleasure." Saint-Julien at once set forth and came to resume the post of Mignon which he had formerly occupied at the Queen's side. The latter, whose passion for this young man was carried to the point of madness, gave Pominy his congé and thereafter held at a distance all those of her officers with whom she had contracted more or less intimate relations. One of these named Vermond, aged eighteen years, conceived such a jealousy of the favorite that he slew him with a pistol bullet at the door of the Queen's carriage. The assassin was arrested; he was searched, and there were found, accord-

**Translator's Note*:—As a queen you ought to be
 Your own house within;
 As a whore it is no sin
 To be in a friary.

ing to the *Journal* of De l'Estoile, "three ciphers upon him: one for life, another for love and the other for silver." He was tried upon the spot, for the Queen had sworn "not to eat or drink until justice had been done him." When he was led to the bloody body of his victim, Marguerite, all in tears was present by her own desire. "Ah! How happy I am that he is dead!" he cried, in looking at the corpse; "If he were not, I would kill him now!"—"Slay him! Slay him! the wicked fellow!" the desolated Queen broke in. "Hold him! hold him! here are my garters: strangle him!" The following day, Vermond, condemned to be beheaded in front of the Hôtel de Sens, walked gaily to the scene of punishment, remarking that he did not mind dying, since his rival was dead.

Immediately after this execution, Queen Marguerite abandoned the Hôtel de Sens, which reminded her too much of her lost mignon. She purchased, in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, a large town-house, situated on the banks of the river, near the Tower of Nesle and at the entrance of the Pré-aux-Clercs. She rebuilt the place at huge expense and had the apartments painted and decorated, and the gardens designed and set out in such a manner as to create an *Ile de Cythère*, where Venus Uranios might establish her temple and her cult. There were to be seen here nothing but the emblems and devices of love, the ciphers, arms and portraits of her lovers new and old; for, by a singular faculty of her licentious imagination, she was enabled so well to mingle memory with material fact that she might incessantly call to the aid of her pleasures the emotions and joys of another day; as though all the gallants she had had in the course of her life were there and able to gratify her, without being able to sate her ever. Thus, Julien Date still preserved his rights and privileges, even though he were dead, and even though Bajaumont had actively taken his place. Following is the manner in which the *Divorce Satyrique* depicts for us Date's successor: "This Baujemont (or rather, Bajaumont, of the house of Duras), who had become the new idol in the temple of this defamed creature, the golden calf of her sacrifices and the most perfect dunce who ever came to her court, had been introduced by Madame d'Anglure, instructed by Madame Roland, civilized by Lemayne (or Le Moine), and thereafter cured of two buboes by Penna, the physician, and thereafter slapped by Delin (or De Loue), being now in possession of that pernicious fortune without which poverty would now be yellowing the rest of his body like his beard." She loved

Bajaumont, her *bec jaune*, as she had loved Date, Pominy, Aubiac and La Mole. But she was to lose him also, and was soon consoled in the same fashion. The Sire de Loue took the sword against the favorite and endeavored to slay him in church, but being prevented, was sent a prisoner to the For-l'Évêque and had to undergo a trial in which the Queen took the part of civil pleader. But Bajaumont was so frightened that he fell ill and contracted a jaundice from which he never completely recovered. Marguerite did not quit the bedside of her *bec jaune*; the King came there to interview her, and he found her is so sorry a plight that, upon leaving the chamber, he remarked to the Queen's maids "that they should all pray God for the convalescence of the said Bajaumont, for if he should happen to die, *ventre-saint gris!*" exclaimed the King gayly, "it would cost me a plenty since I should have to buy a brand new house in place of this one, where she would not want to live any more." (*Journ. de Henri IV* by Pierre de l'Estoile.) Bajaumont did not die, and Marguerite's affection for him only became the more intense and the more eccentric; inasmuch as she had had for long two "*loups*" (ulcers) on her legs, she demanded that Bajaumont put a pair of cauteries on his arms, in order that one might have nothing with which to reproach the other.

"Who then will write of her heroic deeds?" inquires the author of the *Divorce Satyrique* "for they shall not lack chroniclers who will admire her inclination to whorishness, and who will approve those same deeds, that they may be registered in the brothel?" However, the debauched life which Queen Marguerite led at her town-house has not been described in the contemporary memoirs, at least not unless we seek an allegoric picture in some romance like the *Astrée*. We merely know that the Queen, who almost never left her *pourpris amoureux*, was as busy with her devotion as she was with gallantry. She had caused the convent of the Augustinians to be erected at her door, so that she might have, as she remarked, the monks under her hand. She impressed into her service forty English, Scotch or Irish priests, at a rate of forty crowns a year. She distributed every year considerable gifts to various religious communities. She scattered alms with a mad prodigality, for which revenues ten times as large as hers would not have been sufficient. The avowed object of these pious liberalities was to redeem all the sins which she might commit with her gallants and her mignons, notably with one of the latter who was a musician named Villars, and who was known as "King Margot." (See the

Histor. of Tallemant des Réaux.) Nevertheless, Dupleix asserts that "in Marguerite's amours, there was more art and appearance than there was substance; for she enjoyed marvelously playing with love, entertaining herself at it with decency and discretion, and with seeing and hearing men who professed a passion for her; this same she did ordinarily as a manner of divertisement, according to the custom of the court, where one who did not know how to cajole the women barely passed for a clever man, and where a woman who did not know how to win the hearts of men was not looked upon as a clever woman." It might be said that the Queen, notwithstanding her pious works, or the fact that, as P. Hilarion de Cosse tells us, she frequently employed notable sums "in the marrying off of poor girls"—despite all this, it might be said that Her Majesty kept a refined school of Prostitution in her delightful town-house in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, where her little court, composed of poets, philosophers, musicians, debauched gentlemen and abandoned ladies, lived like her in the midst of great excesses, and found a glory in imitating her example and in following the lessons she taught. Henri IV, at the end of the *Divorce Satyrique*, wishes her "some amendment," and prays to God "to impart to her some drop of repentance, for, without it, the mixture of wax and flesh which she prepares as an alembic cannot hide her imperfections, the oil of jasmin with which she every night anoints her body cannot slay the stinking odor of her reputation, nor can the erysipelas which frequently causes her members to peel change and moult her old and evil hide."

Henri IV, it must be admitted, did not fall behind his former wife in the matter of profligacy, but in this respect was the equal of any of his age; yet whatever otherwise may have been the character of this Prince, he was one of the best Kings who had governed France; still, we are forced to admit that the story of his amours and his excesses is an integral part of the history of Prostitution in the sixteenth century. "It might be said," remarks Bayle, in his *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique*, "that if his love for women had permitted him to display all his splendid qualities in all their vigor, he would have surpassed all those heroes whom we most admire. If, the first time he had debauched his daughter, or his neighbor's wife, he had been punished in the same manner as Pierre Abélard, he would have become capable of conquering all Europe." Without admitting, with Bayle, that the unbridled passion of Henri IV for women causes us to regret, for his

honor's sake, that he was not deprived of the means of satisfying it, we still must recognize the fact that this great King surpassed all his predecessors in carnal appetites and in incontinence; but we believe that this furious *abatteur de bois*, as he described himself, would not have become, in ceasing to be a man, a more intrepid warrior, nor a more consummate politician. His vices, like his good qualities, were inherent in his temperament, and his debauched manners, which did not differ from those of his contemporaries, except in an excess of ardor and irritability, did not exert an unfortunate influence over the beneficent impulses of his heart, or the finer manifestations of his character. In an admirable letter to Sully (see the *Oeconomies Royales*, folio edition, Volume III, pages 137 and 138), he defends himself against the charge of loving too much "ladies and the delights of love." "The Scriptures do not absolutely forbid having any sins or defects, inasmuch as such infirmities are intimately associated with the impetuosity and impulsiveness of human nature, but the Scriptures do require that we shall not be dominated by such infirmities, nor permit them to reign over our wills, which is the thing for which I have striven, being able to do no better. And you know, from many things which have passed concerning my mistresses (those passions which all the world regards as the most potent ones in my case), whether I have not often maintained your opinions against their fantasies, even to the point of telling them when they became too importunate, that I should prefer to lose ten mistresses like them to losing one servant like you, who are necessary to me in all honorable and useful things." The historian and panegyrists of Henri IV were not able to accept these excuses, and all agree in blaming, without restriction, the prodigious license of his conduct. "Still less," says Mézeray, "may history excuse his abandonment to women, which was so public and so universal from his youth to the last of his days, that one could hardly give it even the name of love or of gallantry." (*Abrégé Chronol. de l'Hist. de France*, Volume VI, page 392.) The learned and venerable Bishop of Rodez, Hardouin de Pérèfixe, who wrote the *Histoire de Henri le Grand* for the education of King Louis XIV, could not refrain from reproaching his hero with the "constant weakness which he had for beautiful women" (*fragilité continuelle qu'il avoit pour les belles femmes*): "Sometimes," the chronicler adds, with a candor which approaches indecency, "he had desires which were passing and which attacked him for but a single night; but when he met beauties who

struck him to the heart, he loved them to the point of madness, and in these transports, he appeared to be nothing less than Henry the Great."

Agrippa d'Aubigné, in his *Histoire Universelle depuis 1550 jusqu'en 1601*, does not disdain to relate in detail some of the amorous adventures of the King of Navarre, and passes in review in the *Confession de Sancy*, the first mistresses of this Prince, obscure ones or of low degree, who enjoyed but an ephemeral reign and who were frequently ill-paid. He commences by recalling the "infamous amours" of Béarnais with Catherine du Luc of Agen, "who afterward died of hunger, she and an infant which she had by the King;" he then goes on to speak of the damsel of Montaigu (daughter of Jean de Balzac, superintendent of the household of the Prince of Condé), whom the chevalier of Mont Luc had left to the mercy of the Prince of Navarre, through the mediation of a gentleman of Gascony named Salbeuf, "at which he was put to much pain," for the reason that the poor damsel was greatly taken with the chevalier of Mont Luc, whom she had followed all the way to Rome, and for the reason that she felt a profound aversion to the King, "then full of . . . contracted by sleeping with Arnaudine, lass of the huntsman Labrosse." D'Aubigné later names "the little Tignonville, who was impressionable before being married." She was the daughter of the governess of the Princess of Navarre, sister of the young Henri; the latter became foolishly enamoured of her, and his passion only grew with the resistance which it encountered. Sully reports, in his *Oeconomies Royales*, that, about 1576, the Prince went to Bearn, under pretext of seeing a sister, but no one at court was ignorant of the fact that the object of his voyage was to meet with the young Tignonville, "of whom he was then amorous." He wished to employ D'Aubigné to "pimp that pretty creature" (*maquignonner cette belle farouche*); D'Aubigné refused to undertake such a task, and the Prince was forced to look elsewhere to achieve his end. Tignonville was obstinate and would hear nothing, before being provided with a husband, who would take upon his own shoulders the burden of the adventure; the Prince of Navarre finally married her off and obtained the right of prelibation.* The Prince did not blush to descend even to chambermaids and girls of the servants' quarters. He had contracted a venereal malady, through forgetting himself in a stable of Agen, with a certain concubine, and barely was he cured when he slipped one night into the chamber of a servant-maid

*Translator's Note:—The mediaeval *droit du seigneur*.

whose affections he shared with a valet named Goliath; this *goujat* did not suspect that he had for rival the King his master, and endeavored to kill the latter by hurling a tuck at him, at the moment when Henri of Navarre was leaving the bed of this Jourgandine. We can understand how, under such amorous auspices as these, the Prince was shaken in his assault upon the virtue of a young lady of Rabours, who did not hesitate to prefer to him the Admiral of Anville, "who loved her more honestly."

D'Aubigné merely cites in summary fashion "the amours with Dayelle, the Fosseuse; with Fleurette, daughter of a gardener of Nérac; with Martin, wife of a doctor in attendance on the Princess of Condé; with the wife of Sponde; with Esther Imbert, who died, along with the son which she had by the King, of poverty, as well as the father of Esther, who died of hunger at Saint-Denys, in sharing his daughter's fortunes. Afterward came the affairs with Maroquin, an old Gascon debauchee, to whom this nickname had been given "because she had a leatherish skin and some sort of syphilis" (see the *Adventures du Baron de Foënesté*, Book II, chapter 18); with an old baker woman of Saint-Jean; with Madame de Petonville; with la Baveresse (the Slobberer), "so named because she sweated so;" with Mademoiselle Duras; with the daughter of a concierge; with Picotin, an ovenkeeper (*pancousaire*) at Pau; with the Countess of Saint-Mégrin; with the nurse of Câtél-Jaloux, "who wished to give him a slash with a knife, because for a crown which he gave this lady he took back fifteen sous for the procuress;" and, finally, with the two sisters of l'Espée. The malicious author of the *Confession de Sancy* has no intention here of indicating all the intrigues which were the occupation of Henri IV's youth; thus, he does not mention the lady of Narmoutier, who, according to the *Nouveaux Mémoires* of Bassompierre, was not the last on the list; he merely cites a few names and a few facts; he is indignant at having been the witness, if not the accomplice, of excesses which were repulsive to his Huguenot austerity. Queen Marguerite, in her *Mémoires*, was evidently animated by the intention of justifying her personal conduct, by assailing that of the King, but we do not know the circumstances which led her to pause in the midst of these *Mémoires*, which were to have been her defense, and which were never completed; the parts which have been published present regrettable lacunae, in which we remark the manifest design of effacing, or at least of attenuating, the griefs of the wife toward her husband. These lacunae, naturally,

have to do with the most interesting points in the secret history of the King's loves. The Queen's original manuscript must have undergone considerable elisions, leaving gaps which it would be impossible to fill up with the aid of the *Amours du Grand Alcandre*, which does not begin till the year 1589. We still shall be able, however, to round out and rectify some of the statements of the *Confession de Sancy* from Marguerite's *Mémoires* as we possess them, altered and abbreviated.

Marguerite had not been married two years, when her brother, Henri III, put her "*en mauvais ménage*" with the King of Navarre, while the latter was engaged in a broil with the Duke of Alençon, his brother-in-law, "on the subject of jealousy concerning their common amour with Madame de Sauve (Charlotte de Beaune de Semblançay). Henri of Navarre was madly in love with this lady, who "was governed" at that time by the counsels of Le Gaust, "making use of instructions not less pernicious than those of La Célestine." The two Princes had come "to so great and vehement a jealousy one of another that even when there was a question of M. de Guise, Du Guast, De Souvray, and a number of others, all of whom were more in love with her than themselves, they were not concerned." The Queen was not jealous of her husband, "desiring nothing but his content;" one night she perceived that he had lost consciousness, and did all she could to aid him in that "very great weakness, which comes to him, as I believe," she said "from his excesses with women." At this period, they no longer slept in the same bed; and the King, who devoted all his time "to the sole pleasure of enjoying the presence of his mistress, Madame de Sauve," would not reënter the nuptial chamber until two o'clock in the morning, and would arise at daybreak in order to go and rejoin his mistress. The King of Navarre regretfully obeyed the dictates of public policy by leaving the court and his Madame de Sauve but he soon forgot the enchantress, for as Marguerite observed, "the charms of this Circe soon lost their force by distance." The little court of Navarre became, for two years, a sort of plenary court of gallantry and Prostitution; the Queen-Mother had come there, accompanied by her daughter, Marguerite, in order to negotiate with a Protestant gentleman, and she remained eighteen months in Guyenne and in Gascony, in maneuvering the "flying squadron" of her maids of honor. In a conference which took place at Nérac between the Huguenot deputies and Catherine de Medici, the latter "thought to enchant

them by the charms of the beautiful maids whom she had with her and by the eloquence of Pibrac; Marguerite opposed her with the same artifices, won over the gentlemen from her mother's side through the attractions of her own maids, and so adroitly employed her own charms as to enslave the mind and will of the poor Pibrac." (*Hist. de Henri le Grand* by Hardouin de Péréfixe.) In another conference, which took place at the château de Saint-Brix, near Cognac, the King of Navarre, who had more than once surrendered his arms to the beautiful damsels of the Flying Squadron, found himself more hardened against these ruses of amorous warfare; for he was, at the moment, sufficiently worried about the state of his health, following an encounter with La Meroquin. Catherine de' Medici, surrounded by the gracious *état-major* of her maids, smilingly inquired of her care-worn and discomfited son-in-law: "What would you?"—"There is nothing there that I care for Madame!" tristfully replied the Prince, surveying all the beauties who were offered him, and whom he felt obliged to refuse. (*Dict. Hist. et Crit.* of Bayle, article on Henri IV.)

The King had been previously "very amorous" of one of these beautiful maids, so well trained, as Hardouin de Péréfixe tells us, by the Queen-Mother "to amuse the princes and the lords and to discover all their thoughts." This maid was La Dayelle, native of the Isle of Cyprus, who won her dowry by amusing Henri of Navarre, and who afterwards wed Jean d'Hemerits, a Norman gentleman. Dayelle had not occupied the King's attention seriously enough to distract him from his vagrant amours; he also had a "kindly feeling" (*bontés*) in passing for the wife of the scholar, Martinius, professor of Greek and Hebrew, who insisted on believing that his Martine and the King "would not carry things any further than a game," as Colomiez says (in his *Gaule Orientale*, page 93). "After the departure of Dayelle, the King," relates Marguerite, "set about seeking for Rebours, daughter of a president of the Parliament of Paris, who was a malicious girl," and one who had no love for the Queen, but who did the latter all the bad turns in her power. This maid, who died a short while afterward at Chenonceaux, where Marguerite went to visit her and forgive her all, had provided the King with a rival in the hope of making a husband of this latter lover, who was Geoffrey de Buad, Seigneur de Frontenac. La Rebours was not yet dead when the King "commenced to embark with Fosseuse, who was very beautiful and then quite a child and altogether innocent." Françoise de Montmorency, called La Belle

Fosseuse, for the reason that her father was Baron of Fosseux, was one of the maids of honor of the Queen-Mother; but she consented to enter the household of Queen Marguerite, in order to be near the King, whom she loved "extremely," although she had not "permitted him any privileges which decency might not permit;" but Henri was once more jealous of his brother-in-law, the Duke of Alençon, who was courting La Fosseuse at the same time; the latter, "in order to remove his jealousy and let him know that she loved none but him, so abandoned herself, to content him, in all things that he might want of her that she unfortunately become pregnant." Marguerite lent a hand in concealing this pregnancy, and it was she who took in the infant whom La Fosseuse brought into the world. This maid promised herself that she would one day supplant the Queen, and marry the father of her son. But the child did not live, and the mother, cast aside like all those who had preceded her, proceeded to wed, at the King's good pleasure, François de Broc, Seigneur de Saint-Mars.

It was Diane, known as Corisande D'Andouins, Viscountess of Louvigny and Lady of Lescur, who took the place of La Fosseuse. Sully, in his *Mémoires*, says, in speaking of the events of the year 1583, that the King of Navarre "was then at the warmest pitch of his amorous passion for the Countess of Guiche." Corisande d'Andouins, married in 1567 to Philibert Grammont, Count of Guiche, had become a widow in 1580 and had not for long resisted the pressing attentions of the King, who had pursued her since she was fifteen years old. Corisande was no longer young, but she was always beautiful. Agrippa d'Aubigné pictures her for us going to mass at Mont-de-Marsan clad in a green robe and followed by a weird train: "I see this woman, who is of good house, turning and moving this Prince as she would; there she is going to mass, on a feast day, accompanied only by an ape, a water spaniel and a buffoon." The passion of the King for this beautiful lady, who was not less than thirty-five or forty years of age, lasted until 1589. He wrote to her from Marens, in 1587; "My soul, keep me in your good graces; believe me that my fidelity is white and stainless. There was never its like; if that gives you any contentment, live happily." It was at this period that he began thinking of divorce in order to marry his mistress, to whom he had given a promise of marriage, signed in his own blood; but he was turned aside from his purpose by D'Aubigné, who had the courage to say to him: "I do not propose that you renounce your passion. I myself have been amorous,

and I know what you are suffering. But make use, Sire, of a motive which should excite you to render yourself worthy of your mistress, who would despise you if you were so to abase yourself as to marry her!" Corisande would have succeeded, perhaps, in overcoming the wise counsels of Agrippa d'Aubigné, had the King remained by her side, but the hazards of war led him into Normandy, where "he passed by the house of a widowed lady, who kept great state," says the anonymous author of the *Amours du Grand Alcandre*; "she was very beautiful and still young, and she appeared most amiable in the eyes of the King, who ceased loving his absent mistress, who was waiting for him, but who never saw him more."

This widowed lady was Antoinette de Pons, who had been married to Henri de Tilly, Count de la Rocheguyon. She held the fort well and defended her virtue so successfully that the King even spoke to her of marriage, as he had to the other, but she did not permit herself to be taken in any such trap as this, and the King found himself no further along than he had been in the beginning. He was piqued at this unexpected resistance, but he esteemed her all the more for it, and later, the virtuous widow married a second husband, Charles du Plessis, Seigneur de Liancourt. Henri, tired of war and abandoning his gallant pursuits, remarked to the Countess de la Rocheguyon that, inasmuch as she was "really lady of honor, she should be made one at the hands of the Queen, whom he would place upon the throne by marriage." (See the *Mém. et Anecd. des Reines et Régents de France*, by Dreux du Radier.) And yet, there is ground for believing, that, notwithstanding her refusals, the lady of honor had had a feeling of love, or something very like it, for her adorer; she manifested a feeling of jealousy with regard to Gabrielle d'Estrées, lady of Liancourt, who had become the King's favorite, for she set as a condition for her marriage to Charles du Plessis, Seigneur of Liancourt, "that she should never have to bear the name of Liancourt inasmuch as the same name was borne by a whore." (See the *Observat. sur le Grand Alcandre* and its key in the *Journal de Henri III*, edited by Lengley-Dufresnoy.) The King silenced her by according her the title of Marchioness of Guercheville. He had loved her truly, but he had not for that reason imposed upon himself a continence which he regarded as futile or ridiculous. He proceeded, therefore, to console himself for the chagrin which the intractable Comtesse de la Rocheguyon had caused him by frequenting the company of Charlotte des Essarts, Countess of

Romorentin, natural daughter of the Baron of Sautour, squire of the King's stables. He had two daughters by her, who were legitimized. This beauty, not so cruel as the Norman widow, was at the same time the mistress of the Cardinal of Guise (Louis de Lorraine), son of the great Duke of Guise, slain at the *états* of Blois; but the King suspected nothing of all this. During the blockade of Paris, in 1590, when he was lodging with his officers in the Abbey of Montmartre, he had occasion to remark a pretty novice, daughter of the Count of Saint-Aignan and of Marie Babou de la Bourdaisière; he had no difficulty in "taming" (*apprivoiser*) her, while devoting himself all the while to the other nuns. And when the siege was lifted, he without any formality took with him the young Marie de Beauvilliers, whom he led about for a time from city to city without her laying aside the monastic costume; then, this fantasy having passed, he sent back the "nun" to her convent, where she continued to see him from time to time, after he had caused her to be elected Abbess of Montmartre. "The King," it is said, "got along so well with the Abbess, that whenever he spoke of this convent, he referred to it as his monastery, and said that he had been a monk in it." (*Antiq. de Paris*, by Sauval, Volume 1, page 154.) Henri IV was not so well off in the Abbey of Longchamp, where a nun by the name of Catherine de Verdun, whom he recompensed by naming Abbess of Verdun, "had left him," as Bassompierre says, a "*souvenez-vous de moi*," of which he found it hard to rid himself. That was why the abbeys of Longchamp and of Montmartre were called "*le Magasin des engins de l'armée*." (*Confession de Sancy*, Book I, Chapter 8.) He had need at that time of a love more exclusive and more romantic in order to be able to endure with patience the prescriptions of the physicians who had forced upon him a repose necessary to the recovery of his health. His former debaucheries had borne fruit, and it was pointed out that the King, whose blood had been impaired by the Plague of Naples, ought to devote himself to his apothecaries rather than to his mistresses. The preachers of the League were not silent in the pulpit on this text. Roze, who preached at Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, remarked to his auditors "that while that good Queen, that holy Queen (meaning the Queen of Navarre) is shut up within four walls (at Usson), her husband has a harem of women and of whores, but he has been well paid for it. . . ." The editor of the *Mémoires* of l'Estoile, in which this passage figures, under date of the 12th of October, 1592, gives us this note: "The end of this

phrase which could not be printed exists on page 288 of the manuscript." On the 6th of June, 1593, the friar Feu-Ardent, who was preaching at Saint-Jean, belched forth numerous insults directed at the King, and remarked that one day His Majesty would be struck by a thunderbolt or "would split" (*crèverait*) of a sudden: "Already," he added, "the lower part of his belly is all rotten with you know what."

Whether the preachers of the League spoke the truth or not, Henri IV was at this period the lover, or at least the *poursuivant*, of Gabrielle d'Estrées. This charming person, one of the daughters of Antoine d'Estrées, Marquis of Coeuvres, and of François Babou de la Bourdaisière inhabited with her sisters the château of her father near Compiègne. Roger de Saint-Lary, Duke of Bellegarde, grand squire and favorite of the King, had secret relations with her, which had merely augmented their mutual love. The damsel of Coeuvres was admirably beautiful, and her portrait is not less appealing as we glimpse it in the following verses of Guillaume de Sable than it is in the *Crayons* of Pierre Dumoustier and of Jean Rabel:

*Mon oeil est tout ravy, quand il voit et contemple
Ses beaux cheveux orins, qui ornent chaque temple,
Son beau et large front et sourcils ébenins,
Son beau nez decorant et l'une et l'autre joue,
Sur lesquelles Amour à toute heure se joue,
Et ses beaux brillants yeux, deux beaux astres benins.*

*Heureux qui peut baiser sa bouche cinabrine,
Ses levres de corail, sa denture yvoirine,
Son beau double menton, l'une des sept beautez,
Le tout accompagné d'un petit ris folastre,
Une gorge de lys sur un beau sein d'albâtre,
Où deux fermes tetins sont assis et plantez!**

*Translator's Note:—

My eyes are wholly ravished when they view
Those golden locks which her two temples strew,
Her spacious brow and eyebrows ebon-black,
Her pretty nose and each fair blushing cheek,
Where little loves all while play hide-and-seek,
With a beauty in her eyes the bright stars lack.

Happy who kisses that mouth of cinnabar,
Those lips of coral, those pearls whiter far
Than ivory, that double chin so neat,
For it 'mid her seven beauties finds a place,
With her light laugh and lily-throat and grace
Of alabaster-bosom with firm teat!

Guillaume de Sable, former gentleman of the royal hunt, who had served his apprenticeship under Francis I, and who was a fine connoisseur in the matter of the "beauty of ladies" (*beauté de dames*), according to Brantôme's expression, does not forget, in this portrait which adorns his *Muse Chasseresse* (Paris 1611, 12 mo.), Gabrielle's other perfections: "her white and polished hand, her beautiful, long and pearly fingers," her excellent figure, her good grace, and finally,

*Ces petits pieds ouverts, rendant bon tesmoignage
Quel est le demeurant du rare personnage.**

It is probable that it was Marie de Beauvilliers who first spoke of her cousin of Coeuvres to Henri IV, and who thus inspired in the latter a violent desire to know her relative. It is stated, however, in the *Amours du Grand Alcandre*, that Bellegarde, having been so lacking in cleverness as to praise the singular beauty of this young lady in the presence of the King, her eulogy made such an impression on Henri IV that he experienced a lively curiosity to see the lady in question, and became enamoured of her as soon as he had seen her. He brusquely dismissed the Marchioness of Humières, who had given herself to him a little too eagerly, and he declared himself Gabrielle's servant. Bellegarde was greatly put out at this. Gabrielle, whose heart was touched for Bellegarde, showed herself at first averse to a new amour, but she possessed sisters who were more experienced, and who made her understand that she might find a hundred Bellegardes when she wanted them, whereas she would not be able to find a second King of France. It is permissible to suppose that Bellegarde, who did not look forward to a marriage with the daughter of the Marquis of Couevres, did nothing to counteract these counsels, even if he did not add similar ones of his own. Gabrielle had, moreover, a maternal aunt, Madame de Sourdis, one of that family of the Babou de la Bourdaisière family, which produced so many women of easy virtue, as Sully observes. This aunt was a worthy sister of Madame d'Éstrées, who was pointed out by her husband to his friends with the remark: "Do you see that woman? She is setting up a den of whores (*clapier de putains*) in my house!" (*Observat. sur le Grand Alcandre*, in the *Journ.*

**Translator's Note*:—Those little feet which are a witness fair
To the presence of a personage most rare.

de *Henri III*, edition of Lenglet-Dufresnoy). Madame de Sourdis, acting in concert with her lover, the Chancellor Huraut de Cheverny, so cleverly disposed her mother to listen to the King's proposition that Bellegarde was discarded and Gabrielle consented to accept the rôle of favorite. Henri IV was struck with her in so lively a fashion that, not being able to endure her absence, which was a torture to him, he one day left his army, clad as a peasant, crossed Picardy alone, at the risk of falling into the hands of the Leaguers, and appeared before Gabrielle, still in disguise, a bundle of straw on his head and a cudgel in his hand. The letters which he addressed every day to his mistress, amid the incidents of a hazardous campaign, are so filled with passion and a delicate tenderness that they soften our attitude toward the misdemeanors of the two lovers. But these touching letters merely served to cast into relief the scandalous conduct of the King, who, wholly enamoured as he was of Gabrielle, continued to run from mistress to mistress.

Gabrielle, however, was pregnant and there was needed a husband to cover the reputation which Bellegarde and the King had endangered. Although the King "had not had the gloves," as one still said in the time of Tallemant des Réaux, he took upon himself the task of picking out a husband, and found a Picardian gentleman, Nicolas d'Amerval, Seigneur de Liancourt, who consented to espouse the lady. Gabrielle had made the King swear that, on the day of the wedding, he would come to relieve her of the conjugal yoke. The marriage took place; but an unforeseen obstacle prevented Henri IV from coming, as he had promised, and the bridegroom had time to claim his rights. "She did not wish to sleep with him at all," it is said in the *Amours du Grand Alcandre*, "so that her husband, feeling he would have more authority at home than in the city where he had been married, and where Gabrielle's father was governor, took her away; but she saw to it that she was so well accompanied by ladies and relatives who had been invited to her wedding that he did not dare do what was pleasing to him." The following day, the King arrived and delivered the bride; a short time afterward, she gave birth to a son, whom the King refrained from naming *Alexandre*, from fear, as Tallemant des Réaux says, "that he would be called *Alexandre le Grand*; for M. de Bellegarde was called *Monsieur le Grand*; and apparently, he had been the first comer." Nevertheless, Henri IV legitimized César de Vendôme on the very day (January 7, 1595) that the marriage of Gabrielle

d'Éstrées to the Seigneur of Liancourt was broken off and declared null by the official of Amiens. Gabrielle, who had borne at first the title of Marquise de Monceaux later received that of Duchesse de Beaufort. The King, who in his letters called her "my dear heart" (*mon cher coeur*) or "my dear love" (*mes chères amours*) now referred to her publicly as "my beautiful angel" (*mon bel ange*), which gave rise to the following quatrain:

*N'est-ce pas une chose estrange
De voir un grand roy serviteur,
Les femmes vivre sans honneur,
Et d'une putain faire un ange!**

There was nothing irregular in the conduct of the Duchess of Beaufort; although her manners were greatly decried among the people, who had nicknamed her "the King's whore" (*la putain du roi*), a term which was applied to her in the pulpit by the preachers of the League, notably Guarinus, it is a bit difficult to take literally all the accusations which are accumulated against Gabrielle in the *Nouveaux Mémoires* of Bassompierre, published for the first time in 1803. According to these *Mémoires*, the authenticity of which is far from being vouched for, Gabrielle had been prostituted from the age of sixteen by her own mother to King Henri III, in return for the payment of an income of 6,000 crowns, Montigny, who was the go-between in this negotiation, keeping for himself the third of that sum; finally, the Marquis of Coeuvres sold his daughter to Zamet, a rich financier, and to certain other parties; then Gabrielle, given to the Cardinal of Guise for a certain pretty figure, proceeded to give herself, gratis and of her own free will, to the Duke of Longueville, to the Duke of Bellegarde and to various gentlemen in the neighborhood of Coeuvres such as Brunet and Stenay; finally, Bellegarde had ended by prostituting her to the King. (See the *Hist. de Paris* of Dulaure, 12-mo. edition, Volume V, pages 189 and following.) But it might easily be proved that Bassompierre, or the author of the *Nouveaux Mémoires*, printed under his name, has confused persons, facts and periods. He

**Translator's Note:—Is't not a thing at which to quake*

To see a great but lackey king

Turn a woman into a shameless thing

And of a whore an angel make!

has, it may be, attributed to Gabrielle alone all the gallantries of which her sisters and other female relatives were guilty; for the Maison de la Bourdaisière, Tallemant des Réaux tells us, harbored "the most fertile race of gallant women that France ever saw, including as many as twenty-five or twenty-six of this sort, either nuns or married, all of whom made love most haughtily; hence it was, it came to be said that the arms of la Bourdaisière were a 'handful of vetches' (*poignée de vesces*: women of evil life) for it was found, by a happy accident, that in the family's coat of arms was a hand sowing vetches." And so the following quatrain was struck off:

*Nous devons bénir ceste main
Qui sème avec tant de largesses,
Pour le plaisir du genre humain,
Quantité de si belles vesces.**

Gabrielle, having become the King's titular mistress, still kept up, nevertheless, secret relations with her lover, M. de Bellegarde, whom she always loved; but she had dismissed, designedly and not without some noise, all the men whom scandal had reported to be her gallants. Thus, she had quarrelled with the Duke of Longueville, after she had demanded back the letters which he had had from her, while we are assured that she coolly revenged herself for the indiscretion of this nobleman, who boasted of having been the marshal of the King's household. However, Henri IV was only jealous of Bellegarde. "He commanded ten times that he be slain," says Tallemant des Réaux, "then he repented when he came to consider that he had taken her from his rival." One night, M. de Praslin came to warn the King that Bellegarde was to be found shut up in the chamber of the Duchess of Beaufort. The King arose, trembling with wrath; he dressed himself in haste, took his sword in hand and followed M. de Praslin with a sigh; but when he arrived at the entrance of the Duchess' apartment, he was struck with remorse and paused. "Ah!" he said, "that would grieve her too greatly!" And he returned to his couch without troubling the tête-à-tête of the two lovers. Another time, Bellegarde and the

**Translator's Note:*—We ought to bless the hand that showers
Such largess on us wretches,
For the pleasure of our human hours,
So many handsome vetches.

Duchess were once more together and did not wait for the King; Henri IV presented himself at the door and demanded that it be opened; there was no other door by which Bellegarde could leave. The Duchess invented all sorts of pretexts to induce the King to leave; but he insisted, commanded, and grew angry. Gabrielle's chambermaid (it was a girl named la Rousse, who knew her trade marvelously well) proceeded to conceal the half-clad Bellegarde, in a little closet opening off an alcove, destined to hold comfitures, spices and sugar-plums. The King was then brought in. His Majesty regarded with a defiant air the accusing traces which his rival had left in his flight. He sat down silently, and then, suddenly, complaining of hunger, called for comfitures. He went straight to the door of the closet, found it locked, and demanded the key; when it was not given him, he threatened to break the door down. Bellegarde had had time to complete his toilet and to leap out the window. It was La Rousse who then appeared to avert the King's suspicions. "I see well enough, Sire," said Gabrielle, who determined to take advantage of the occasion, "I see well enough that you would treat me like the others whom you have loved, and that you, in your changing humor, are seeking some pretext to break with me; I will prevent that by retiring at once." She burst into tears, which the King dried with his kisses, beseeching her to calm herself and to forgive him. It is thus that the adventure is reported in the *Amours du Grand Alcandre*. Popular tradition added a few details more conformable to the character of Henri IV. According to the tale repeated by all the versifiers of Ana, Bellegarde had hidden himself under Gabrielle's bed, and the King, taking the place which his grand squire had quitted, had demanded dried sweetmeats; la Rousse, having brought him a number of boxes, the King hurled one under the bed. "We all must live!" he cried gayly to his mistress. (See the *Menagiana*, Volume II, page 71.)*

The rumor had been spread that the paternity of César, Duke of Vendôme, was not to be attributed to the King; an anecdote which Sully does not hesitate to accord a place in his *Mémoires* would appear to have been the source of this slanderous report. Alibour, first physician to the King, having visited Gabrielle, who was indisposed, came to announce to Henri IV "that he had found her in a state of slight emotion, but that her malady would have a happy outcome." The

**Translator's Note*.—See a preceding chapter in which the King appears as Francis I and the lover as Brissac. The theme has been employed on the modern stage.

King inquired if it was necessary to bleed her. "Sire, I do not believe so; it would be better to wait until she is half-term," replied Alibour.— "What do you mean to tell me, my good man?" replied the King wrathfully, "are you dreaming? Are we dealing with pregnancy? I know the symptoms; you know nothing about it, or else more evil fellows have made you speak."—"Sire, I do not know the symptoms of which you speak," replied Alibour, "but I know that before seven months what I have told you will be verified." The prediction of the physician, as a matter of fact, was verified: Gabrielle had an accouchement, but Alibour did not live to witness the event. It was said that he had been poisoned. Tallemant des Réaux has given the explanation of this incident, so frequently alleged against Gabrielle, in the following passage, which M. Paulin Paris restores in his edition, following the original manuscript: "The truth of the story of the good Alibour, first physician to the King, is that Henri IV had a gonorrhea which engendered a carnosity and later a retention of urine, of which he died at Monceaux. And M. d'Alibour remarked that the King was not capable of procreating during this flow of corrupt semen. It was a medical question; but the pregnancy of Madame de Beaufort was too far advanced to leave any room for doubt." (See the *Histor.*, third edition, Volume I, page 112.) The elder son of Gabrielle was legitimized in the same manner as his brother, Alexandre, and his sister, Henriette. Their mother would certainly have married the King, had she not died of poisoning while efforts were being made at Rome to break the marriage of Henri IV and Marguerite of Valois. M. de Sancy fell into disgrace for having dared to say to the King, who consulted him upon his project of marrying Madame de Beaufort, that, "whore for whore, he would prefer the daughter of Henri II to the daughter of Madame d'Estrées, who had died in a brothel." (See the story of Sully in Tallemant des Réaux.) Sully, who was no less opposed than M. de Sancy to this shameful misalliance, but who combatted it with more diplomacy, nevertheless affirms, in his *Mémoires*, that "the King was never bent upon marrying a light woman."

The more Henri IV evidenced his light passion for his "beautiful angel," the more energetically did public opinion turn against the favorite, who had not been restored to the public's good graces by marriage. Her amours with the Duke of Bellegarde were so well known, even among the lower classes, that one frequently heard this

proverbial remark, which has been preserved for us in the *Banquet et Après-Diné du Comte d'Arète*, a pamphlet of the famous Leaguer, Louis of Orleans: "Fine swords like to go in fine scabbards." The Parisians, who were always in a ferment over the League, detested the Duchess of Beaufort on account of the bad morals which were attributed to her in popular remarks and *pasquils*. The hatred which this favorite had aroused against herself was reflected in the public attitude towards the King: "The people," wrote P. de l'Éstoile, under date of the 13th of April, 1596, "the people, who are a heady animal, inconstant and fitful, began now to speak as much evil of their King as they before had spoken good, finding occasion in the fact that he amused himself a little too much with Madame la Marquise." In a *pasquil* "very villainous and scandalous" (*très-vilain et scandaleux*) which was then current, there were verses in which the King was not spared any more than his mistress:

*Ha! vous parlez de vostre roy!
 —Non, fais, je vous jure, ma foy!
 Par Dieu! j'ay l'ame trop réale:
 Je parle de Sardanapale,
 Com' sempre star in bordello,
 No fa Hercule immortello
 Au royaume de Conardise,
 Ou, par madame la Marquise,
 Les grans noms sont mis a monceaux
 Et tout la France en morceaux,
 Pour assouvir son putanisme.**

All the honest folk, all the good citizens, were indignant at the idea of a union between the King and a dishonored woman, which had

*Translator's Note:—

Ha! So you speak of that King of yours!
 But come, on my word, why speak of whores!
 By God! Such a King is not for us:
 I speak of Sardanapalus.
 Since being always *in bordello*
 Does not make Hercules *immortello*
 In the realm of cowardice,
 Where by Madame la Marquise
 The greatest names are turned to naught
 And all of France is torn and wrought
 To satisfy his whorishness.

already cut off the Queen of France. A satirist published the following *huitain* on the subject of this pretty marriage, which was not as yet a fact, there being only the promise signed by the hand of Henri IV:

*Mariez-vous, de par Dieul sire,
Votre heritier est tout certain,
Puisqu' aussy bien un peu de cire
Legitime un fils de putain:
Putain dont les soeurs sont putantes,
La grand'mère le fut jadis,
La mère, cousines et tantes,
Horsmis madame de Sourdis!**

Madame de Sourdis, as we have said above, was the beloved of the old Chancellor of Cheverny, and she had by him a son whom the King himself held at the baptismal font, at Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois. "Sire," remarked the midwife, as she handed His Majesty the infant, "be careful to hold it very well, for it is quite heavy."—"I am not astonished," replied Henri IV, "the seals are still hanging from its rump!" Gabrielle did not have the time to achieve her ends. She was carried off in a few hours by a sudden malady, which showed all the symptoms of a poisoning. Her rivals and her enemies could not pardon her, even after her death; inasmuch as her obsequies were conducted by her brother-in-law, the Marechal de Balagny, natural son of a bishop of Valence, while her six sisters, "still more dissolute than she," assisted at the ceremony, the poet Sigogne, proceeded to compose this *sixain*, which Sauval has preserved in the *Amours des Rois de France*:

*J'ay vu passer sous ma fenestre
Les six Pechez mortels vivants,
Conduits par le bastard d'un prestre,
Qui tous ensemble alloient chantants*

**Translator's Note*:—Yes, marry, sire, for God's sake,
Nor for an heir need you fear more,
Since a little candle-wax can make
Legitimate the son of a whore:
A whore whose sisters are termagants,
As her grandmother used to be,
Her mother, cousins and her aunts,
All except Madame de Sourdis!

*Un Requiescat in pace
Pour le septiesme trespasé.**

Henri IV could not live without a titular mistress, which fact, however, did not prevent him from taking as many transient (*volantes*) ones as offered. Madame de Beaufort was barely buried before the ladies of the court began disputing as to who should succeed her in the good graces of the King; the successor was found to be Mademoiselle Henriette d'Entragues. She was the daughter of that beautiful and gentle Marie Touchet, who had been loved by Charles IX, and who was married to François de Balzac, Seigneur d'Entragues. This damsel, aged nineteen to twenty years, was distinguished no less by her wit than by her beauty. She possessed above all, according to Sully, "that sharp tongue (*bec affilé*), which, on many occasions, rendered her company most agreeable." Mademoiselle d'Entragues was so well recommended to the King by persons who desired to make of her a favorite that the King at once experienced the desire "to see her, then to see her again, then to love her." He did love her, as soon as he seen her; and Mademoiselle d'Entragues, faithful to the instructions of her mother, and especially to those of her brother, readily permitted herself to be loved. She was not, it was remarked, an apprentice; and yet, she bargained for long over those final favors which Henri IV claimed with all the ardor of a lover and all the authority of a King. We are dealing here with one of the most monstrous traffickings in Prostitution to be found in the history of the loves of kings. The Entragues family, the father, the mother, their friends and their advisers, were all more or less concerned in these shameful negotiations. One hundred thousand crowns were demanded for the virtue of Mademoiselle d'Entragues. Certain accounts state that the sum was reduced to 50,000. In any case, an agreement was reached as to the price; but money was not all: Mademoiselle d'Entragues, on the advice of her father and mother, demanded a promise of marriage, under this strange condition, that she should furnish the King a male child within the course of a year! "I am so closely

*Translator's Note:—Beneath my window I've seen pass
Six mortal sins in living file,
Led by some priest's bastard-ass,
And singing all the while
A requiem uncomforted
For the seventh which was dead.

watched," remarked Henriette d'Entragues to her lover, "that it is impossible to accord you all the proofs of love, proofs which I cannot refuse the greatest King in the world. All we need is an occasion, and I can see clearly enough that we shall never have any freedom if we do not get away from M. and Madame d'Entragues." The latter consented to close their eyes as soon as they had in their hands the promise of marriage signed and sealed in due form. "This pimpery and these female wiles so well cajoled the King," says Sully, that the promise was subscribed and given "for the sake of a treasure which it may be he was not to find." Sully had the courage to make every effort in his power to dissuade his master from this amorous folly, which threatened to cost His Majesty more than 100,000 crowns. He even tore up the promise of marriage which the King showed him: "If you will only recall," he remarked to him with firmness, "all that you have said to me formerly of this girl and her brother, the Count of Auvergne, during the lifetime of Madame the Duchess (of Beaufort), remarks which you made to me and orders you gave me to see to it that all this baggage (for it was thus that you then expressed yourself in speaking of the household of M. and Madame d'Entragues) left Paris,—if you will recall all this, you will see things clearly; you will count less on finding what you are looking for; and in any case, you will reflect that this is not something which is worth purchasing for 100,000 crowns, while God grant it does not cost you more some future day!"

This advice, coming from a good and faithful servitor, was supported by all the gallant distractions which the party opposed to Mademoiselle d'Entragues could conceive. Every day, new maidens were "produced," but these, chosen among the prettiest and the most seductive, only served, in a manner, to excite the King's passion for Mademoiselle d'Entragues. "He did not yet possess Mademoiselle d'Entragues," says Bassompierre, in his *Mémoires*, "and slept sometimes with a beautiful lass named La Glandée." He was in the habit of going to the Hôtel de Zamet, where she was brought to him. But La Glandée was very soon dethroned by La Fanuche.

Tallemant des Réaux, who has revealed to us so many new and curious details concerning Henri IV, reports a rather free *bon mot* on the subject of La Fanuche, who had been introduced to the King as a virgin, but who was far from being an apprentice. (See the edition of the *Historiettes*, published with commentaries by MM. Monmerqué

and Paulin Paris, members of the Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, Volume I.)

This Fanuche had been for long a fashionable courtesan, in the grand style of the beautiful Imperia and the Italian courtezans; she was renowned above all for her beautiful body and its secret perfections. A quatrain, published in 1637, in the second part of the *Poésies et Rencontres* of the Sieur de Neuf-Germain, poet *hétéroclite* of Gaston of Orleans, shows us that Fanuche, at this period (she was then more than forty years old), was still worthy of the homage of her admirers and of the praises of gallant poetry.

But Henri IV was not content with these transitory amours; he desired a permanent mistress; his heart was set on it, and he would have given half his realm to possess Mademoiselle d'Entragues. He possessed her through the promise of marriage and a gift of 100,000 crowns. He was extended credit for this sum. When it came time to pay, he did so sulkily; he ordered them to bring into his study the fine-sounding currency, which was spread out in front of him on the floor. "*Ventre-saint-gris!*" he exclaimed, in beholding the piles of money at his feet, "there is one night well paid for!" He devoted himself from then on to this conquest, which had cost him so dearly, and which elevated Mademoiselle d'Entragues to the rank of favorite; but he still relapsed into infidelities now and then, all of which rendered him neither the less affectionate nor the less attentive toward his new mistress.

His divorce had been decreed by the court of Rome; but, however powerful his love for his mistress may have been, he permitted himself to become involved in a political alliance, and wedded Maria de' Medici in 1600. Mademoiselle d'Entragues, who had vainly opposed this union, then employed all her resources in preserving the title and functions of favorite, having given up the idea of becoming Queen of France. Henri IV had created her Marchioness of Verneuil, and he did not appear to be resolved, despite his marriage, upon breaking off relations with her, whom he preferred to all others.

Henriette de Balzac, however, whose character at once violent, pliable and despotic had exerted a great influence over the King, did not spare him grumblings and complaints; she remarked to him one day "that it was a good thing he was a King, for otherwise no one would be able to endure him, and that he stunk like carrion." (See the *Historiette* of Henri IV, in Tallemant des Réaux.) She called him

"Captain Good Will" (*Capitaine Bon Vouloir*), because he was always ready to pay gallant tribute, and because he felt himself drawn toward all women in general. The Marchioness of Verneuil, who lodged in the Hôtel de la Force, near the Louvre, shared with the Queen, so to speak, the King's attentions and the assiduities of the courtiers; she did not despair of being able, one day or another, to win out over Maria de' Medici, whom she never referred to otherwise than as *l'Italienne*, or *la grosse banquière* ("the big money-lender"). This public installation of a titular mistress opposite the Louvre was a scandal which made the people murmur, and caused the true servants of Henri IV to groan.

In order to separate him from this astute woman, whose eye was always on the crown of France, a number of amorous intrigues were formed, destined to diminish the power of the Marchioness of Verneuil by diminishing her prestige. But Henri IV, in running the gamut of amorous adventures which were offered him, was tireless in coming back "warmer than ever" (*plus échauffé*) to the Marchioness. In 1600, according to Bassompierre (old and new *Mémoires*), he became "a little" amorous of one of the Queen's maids named la Bourdaisière; then of Madame de Boinville, wife of a maître des requêtes; then of Mademoiselle Clein; then of the wife of a counsellor named Quelin; then of the Countess of Lemoux; then of a lady of honor of the Queen called Foulebon, etc. The Marchioness of Verneuil was not the less fêted for all of this; the example set by the King had undoubtedly taught her to bide her time, and it may be supposed that she was not lacking in consolations. A saying of Henri IV, reported by Tallemant des Réaux, leads us to think that he was not as jealous of the Marchioness as he had been of Gabrielle d'Estrées. He was told that M. de Guise was amorous of Madame de Verneuil. He did not appear to be worried about the matter, but said: 'Well, we must leave them bread and whores! They have been deprived of so many other things!' " The Marchioness of Verneuil felt sufficiently sure of the King's attachment not to have to fear any chance rivals; nevertheless, her standing was almost equalled for a moment by that of Jacqueline du Bueil, daughter of a brave gentleman of Brittany, Claude du Bueil, Seigneur de Courcillon. The King, during one of his quarrels with his titular mistress, had passed the time with this young and charming person, who dared refuse him nothing, and who, as a result, became pregnant. It was necessary to find a husband to assume the responsi-

bility. "On Tuesday, the 5th of the month of October (1604)," ingenuously relates P. de l'Estoile in his *Registre-Journal* of the reign of Henri IV, "at six o'clock in the morning, Mademoiselle de Bueil, new mistress of the King, wed at Saint-Maur-des-Fossez the young Chauvalon, a gentleman, good musician and lute-player, but for all of that a ne'er-do-well (as was said), even so far as the goods of this world are concerned. He had the honor of being the first to sleep with the bride, but lighted, as was said, all the time he was there, by torches and watched over by gentlemen, by order of the King, who the following day slept with her at Paris in the lodging of Montauban, where he was in bed until two o'clock of the afternoon. It was said that her husband had slept in a little garret above the King's chamber, and thus was over his wife, although there was a floor between the two." This new mistress threatened to evict the Marchioness of Verneuil, but the latter was not at a loss for a means of bringing the King back to her side; she saw to it that the heart of Jacqueline de Bueil was vigorously besieged by the young Prince of Joinville, brother of the Duke of Guise, who was her own suitor and very devoted to her. While the two lovers were lying stretched out together, the King was advised of it, whereupon he complained bitterly to the old Duchess of Guise: "That a man may marry my mistress at the proper time," he said, "that is well and good; but that one should dispute her with me and put himself in the place of a gallant, that is something I will not suffer!" He would have caused the Prince of Joinville to be arrested, if this too-favored rival had not tacitly renounced the possession of Jacqueline by leaving her and the court. Henri IV forgave all; Mademoiselle de Bueil was made Countess of Moret, and the son whom she brought into the world following the Prince of Joinville's departure, was legitimatized like those of Gabrielle d'Estrées had been.

The Marchioness of Verneuil kept her "Captain Good Will" charmed; she had left with him memories which always brought him back to her side despite all his other affairs. When she was accused of being involved in a conspiracy against the king, along with her father, her brother and other lords, she only laughed mockingly; when she was condemned, she had but to see the King in order to obtain grace for all the conspirators, and although her rôle as favorite ended about this period, Henri IV frequently went to see her, and showed her none the less favor. The Marchioness was able to divert him better than any other person in the world, and the Queen was always jealous

of her. In March, 1607, His Majesty had betaken himself with the court to Chantilly, where Madame de Verneuil was sojourning. He had brought with him a maid named Lahaye, "whom he supported," says De l'Estoile, "and whom he took with him everywhere he went." The Marchioness remarked to him, jokingly, as was her custom: "You must have some bad prisoners with you, seeing that they lodge you at Lahaye in the wind and rain!"* This Lahaye fell into disgrace the following year and took the veil in the Abbey of Fontevrault, "the final and common enough retreat of ladies of her trade," says P. de l'Estoile (under date of the 30th of March, 1608), "where sometimes they do not discontinue it." An anecdote, related in the notes of Lenglet-Dufresnoy on the *Journal de Henri IV* (under date of the 12th of March, 1604), informs us that the King took with him everywhere in his suite, on his travels and to his devotions, a troop of women and maidens of the court; thus, when he went to hear the sermons of Père Gonthier, the Jesuit, in different churches of Paris, these ladies would come there in high toilet, in order to win a look and a smile from Henri IV. Once, when the Jesuit was preaching at Saint-Gervais, the Marchioness of Verneuil and many ladies came to seat themselves near the King. They were whispering among themselves, and the Marchioness was exchanging signs with Henri, who had all he could do to keep from laughing. Père Gonthier stopped short in the midst of his preaching, and, turning toward the King, said with bitterness: "Sire, will you never stop coming with a seraglio to listen to the word of God and to create so great a scandal in the holy place?" The King did not resent the reprimand; but was no more reserved in his manners than he had been before, and took no pains to avoid giving cause for scandal to his subjects.

His last amour, the one, possibly, which led to Ravailac's taking of the dagger, was carried to the highest point of depravity. It is one of the strangest episodes in the history of Prostitution at the court of France. "The King, in those times," wrote Pierre de l'Estoile, in his *Journals*, under date of the month of June, 1609, "being hopelessly enamoured of Madame, the Princess of Condé, esteemed the most beautiful lady, not only of the court, but of all France, gave rise, by his deportment, to fresh talk on the part of the curious and the gossiping, who already were speaking too licentiously of His Majesty, and of the villainies and corruptions of the court." The young Charlotte-Marguerite,

*Translator's Note:—That is, in the "hedges," a play on the name, Lahaye.

daughter of Henri, Duke of Montmorency, Marshal and Constable of France, had appeared for the first time at court that year. "She was so young," says the author of the *Amours du Grand Alcandre*, "that it seemed she was barely out of infancy. Her beauty was miraculous and all her actions were so agreeable that there was marvel everywhere." Alcandre, seeing her dance with a dart in her hand, since for the ballet, they (the Queen's ladies) were representing Diana's nymphs, felt his heart so violently pierced that he knew the wound would be life-long. The Constable had cast eyes upon Bassompierre, with a view to making the latter his son-in-law, but the King, once having beheld this miracle of beauty and of grace, did not hesitate to seek another marriage which would leave the field free to his shameful designs. "I have become not merely enamoured, but furiously so and more, of Mademoiselle de Montmorency," he observed to Bassompierre, who was one of his companions at table and in debauchery. "If you wed her and she loves you, I shall hate you; if she loves me, you will hate me. It will be better that this should not be the cause of breaking our good relations, for I love you very affectionately. I am resolved to marry her to my nephew, the Prince of Condé, and so to keep her in my family. This shall be the consolation and amusement of that old age upon which I am already entering. I shall give to my nephew, who loves the chase a thousand times better than he does the ladies, 100,000 pounds a year by way of diversion, and I want no other grace of her beyond affection, without seeking anything more." Bassompierre retired before what amounted to a formal command, and Mademoiselle de Montmorency espoused the Prince of Condé. From then on, the King shamelessly abandoned himself to his utterly extravagant passion, a passion which, l'Estoile tells us, "was so great a one that he was seen to change, in less than no time, in habits, beard and countenance." The poet Malherbe complacently lent his muse to the celebration of this adulterous passion, which, if we are to credit the stanzas composed under the name of *Alcandre*, did not find *Oranthe* insensible. However this may be, the King "appearing so worn from hunting this beautiful prey, for whom he would have bartered all the world at need, the Prince of Condé addressed to His Majesty certain lively reproaches, and even went so far, it is said, as to call him b. . . ." (See the *Mém.-Journaux* of P. de l'Estoile, edition of MM. Champollion, page 537, reign of Henri IV.) The Prince of Condé, "being well warned that the King was making use of

his mother as an instrument in corrupting his wife's modesty, entered into a heated argument with the older woman, abused her and called her a procuress, or other names which were no better, reproaching her with having shame painted upon her forehead." This incredible passage, which shows us a mother laboring to dishonor her son, is one of the sorriest evidences of the moral degradation of courtiers at this epoch. Pierre de l'Estoile adds one last stroke to this hideous picture, by attributing to the Queen herself a complicity in this general conspiracy against the Princess of Condé. "I am only too well aware," said Maria de' Medici, "that for this fine bargain there are already thirty procuresses at need, and if I mix in the affair, I shall make the thirty-first." The Prince of Condé, however, escaped the violent ruses which threatened his conjugal honor; he rescued his wife and took her out of France, in order to place her in security in Brussels. Henri IV would have gone there to seek her, weapons in his hands, if the dagger of a regicide had not prostrated his culpable projects by taking away his life.

The frenzied love of Henri IV for the Princess of Condé had led to renewed activity among the complacent love-courtiers then employed for the King's pleasure. It is one of the most remarkable characteristics of Prostitution at this period, this zeal of those at court in serving as officious go-betweens, in affairs of gallantry, not only for the King, but for the princes and the other great ones as well. All moral sense would appear to have been lost, to such a point that a gentleman had no scruples in lending himself to the infamous designs of the agents of debauchery, provided he might thereby satisfy the amorous whims of a powerful protector. Each one, in order to win the good graces of his patron, did not blush to become at need a vile pimp; each one felt proud and happy to produce a new marvel of beauty destined for the royal couch. One should, accordingly, blame these miserable purveyors, rather than the King himself, who, it is true, was incapable of resisting the immodest temptations held out to him. The most perfect example of pimping, the chief accomplice in Henri's misdemeanors, was the Italian, Sebastian Zamet, who from the simple cordwainer that he had been under Henri III, had speedily become "lord of seventeen hundred thousand crowns, counsellor to the King, Governor of Fontainebleau, superintendent of the Queen's house, Baron of Billy, and of Murat, etc." Zamet, whom Henri IV familiarly called *Bastien*, and whose jovial humor, unbridled wit and servile devotion were appre-

ciated by the King, had, so to speak, a finger in all his master's amours. It was he who fulfilled the mysterious functions of superintendent of pleasures to the King. It was in his magnificent apartment, situated in the rue de la Cerisaie, that the King took part in debauched gatherings with the young lords of his court; it was to this house that the King came frequently to spend the night with the women whom Zamet took it upon himself to provide; it was here that all the King's mistresses were paid their scot. Zamet had two assistants in the vile trade which he practiced with so much cleverness and cynicism in the service of Henri IV; they were the Duke of Bellegarde and the Marquis de Varenne. The former, who had been one of those called the "pimps in ordinary to His Majesty," (see the *Tocsin des Massacreurs*, edition of 1579, page 47), excelled in the art of finding fresh tidbits for the King; he knew how to win over the girls and how to "train them for the royal ménage, like good mares." He had "turned out" Gabrielle d'Estrées; he later produced Jacqueline du Bueil. Varenne, who had begun by being cook in the household of Madame, the King's sister, had advanced so well in the favor of this Prince that he had become comptroller-general of posts and counsellor of State; he was especially charged with bearing love-messages; he was called the *maître*, or the minister of pleasures to the King" (*ministre des voluptés du roi*: see the *Life* of M. du Plessis-Mornay, Book II.) "The pimps are as good as marquises!" cries D'Aubigné, in the *Confession de Sancy*, in speaking of Varenne, who had "transubstantiated the kitchen porridges (*potages*) into state puddings (*tripotages*) and paper pellets (*poulets*) into human pullets (*poulets*).

The women and the greatest of the ladies also took part in this graceful traffic, which earned for them the favor of the Prince. We have seen, above, how the Dowager-Princess of Condé had leagued herself with a "green gallant" (*verd galant*) with a gray beard against her daughter-in-law's chastity and her own son's honor. We have seen how Madame de Sourdis favored the adulterous relations of her niece, Gabrielle d'Estrées. The Princess of Conti (Mademoiselle de Guise), who had likewise been one of the mistresses of the "great Alcandre," did not cease to seek new amusements for the latter, and was tireless in corrupting her own rivals. We might mention a great number of other women of high name who were always ready to aid the libertine fantasies of the most debauched of kings. In the *Bibliothèque* (imaginary) de *Maître Guillaume*, a facetious satire frequently cited in the

notes to the *Confession de Sancy*, we note the two following works: *Sept livres de Chasteté, faits par la Varenne, dédiés à Madame de Retz*, and the *Préceptes de production, autrement de macquerellage, composés par Madame de Villers, commentés par madame de Vitry et dédiés à la Varenne*. A facetious work of the same sort, which is only known to us by an extract in the *Journal* of P. de l'Estoile (under date of the month of July, 1609), describes still better the scandalous *maquignonage* which was practiced for Henri Quatre's special benefit. In a pleasant Request to the king, one Clavelle, who describes himself as Duret's companion," humbly remonstrates with His Majesty "that he had practiced and exercised as well and better than he (Duret) the trade of pimping (which is one of the principal trades, and one to which the mind of man is most given), having conducted very difficult enterprises along those lines, with much more honor and less hazard than Duret (the latter not being able to teach him anything, to do which he defies him or any man.) Witness the procuring (he says) of such and such a one (whom he specifies in his Request), such and such a bargain (of which you yourself are not ignorant, Sire,) brought to perfection and effectiveness by his own diligence, where another, even though well versed in the art, would have lost his way and his pains (*ses pas et ses peines*), and a thousand other little services of the same stripe, with which he has obliged the great and small at the court." Tallemant des Réaux relates that the Marshal of Roquelaure, who was one-eyed, upon accompanying the King in the royal carriage, inquired of a "merchant" of this kind how he distinguished the males from the females. "Jesus!" replied this fish-vender. "There is nothing easier; the males are one-eyed." And Tallemant adds: "He was accused of having sometimes played the 'ruffian' to his master."

Surely, the innumerable amours of Queen Marguerite and those of the *Grand Alcandre*, set forth very summarily, as we have endeavored to do, constitute the most curious and the most characteristic episode in the history of Prostitution at the end of the century.

CHAPTER LXXVII

DULAURE remarks with reason, in his *Histoire de Paris* (12-mo. edition, Volume IV, page 492), that the scenes of lust so complacently described by Brantôme by way of giving us a picture of the state of manners at the court “are like those which one might expect to find in the annals of a house of debauchery;” but Brantôme, who lived till 1614, had left the court in 1582, a disappointed courtier, in order to retire to his estate, where he wrote his memoirs, which have not all come down to us. His niece, Madame de Duretal, took care to burn the most scandalous of these, and we may judge what the others were like by those which remain. Brantôme did not personally witness the end of Henri III’s reign nor the whole of the reign of Henri IV. He only knew what took place at the Louvre through correspondence with friends whom he had left behind, and he abstains from recording, upon their more or less partial testimony, all those incidents for which he is unable to vouch. Thus, we are in a position to seek from him no information concerning the history of Prostitution at the court of Henri III and that of Henri IV. Brantôme, if we may judge from a few pages in which he appears as the implacable enemy of Italian debauchery, undoubtedly must have groaned over the shameful aberrations of the last of the Valois, surrounded by his vile mignons. He was convinced that, as a result of these strange horrors, the *joli train* of the court of France had ceased, and that the love of ladies, so commended by French tradition, no longer existed except among a few elderly courtiers and incorruptible gentlemen of the old school. It is not to be supposed, however, that the abominable clique of mignons and hermaphrodites had wiped out all honest gallantry, or that the ladies at the court of Henri III had become either neutral or indifferent on a question in which they were always the first to manifest an interest. It might even be asserted to the honor of the mignons, that they were not so negligent of the fair sex as one might suspect from their villainous reputation. Henri III had had mistresses; his favorites had them also, and a number of these latter who died tragic deaths had none other than the women to blame.

Henri III, when he was as yet only Duke of Anjou, loved Renée de Rieux, under the name of La belle Châteauneuf; she was one of the

maids of honor to Catherine de' Medici, whom a famous Huguenot pamphlet branded as *Le Tocsin des Massacreurs*. "The public is by no means ignorant," one reads in this pamphlet (page 49 of the edition of 1570), "of the immodesty of the maids in the suite of the Queen-Mother, as witness La Rouet, Montigny, Châteauneuf, Atri and others, whose chastity is so scarce that it would not be possible to find a single witness to it among all the courtiers. When the Duke of Anjou left for Poland, where he was called by the Polish nobles who had offered him the crown, he desired to find a husband for Mademoiselle de Châteauneuf, to whom he had given, it was said, a written promise of marriage. He looked among the nobility of the court for one who might be able to take his place. Mademoiselle de Châteauneuf, who was of a haughty and inflexible disposition, did not, it is true, lend herself to this matrimonial bargaining. The Duke of Anjou's eyes fell upon Nantouillet, provost of Paris, one of his companions at table and in pleasure, but Nantouillet very haughtily declined the honor which was offered him, and replied to the new King of Poland that "to wed a prostitute, he would wait until His Majesty had set up brothels in the Louvre." This reply was reported to Charles IX, who harbored a resentment for it towards Nantouillet. A few days afterward (September, 1573), a letter written from Paris by a courtier was intercepted, in which the writer spoke in these terms of a great scandal which had taken place, and which was the chief topic of conversation in the city and at the court: "I have seen," said the author of this letter, "the three Kings who are called the Tyrant, the King of Poland, and the third who is the King of Navarre, who, by way of rendering grace to God for peace and their own deliverance, do not cease to despise him and provoke him by the lives they lead, by their stinking and lascivious ways and other such sardanapalisms. I know that these three fine sires recently caused themselves to be served at a solemn banquet which they gave, by harlots wholly naked. . . ." The MM. Champollion, in their edition of the *Journal de Henri III*, have abstained from reproducing certain obscene passages which Pierre de l'Estoile has inserted throughout his manuscript. The banquet had been but the prelude to scenes still more unheard-of. The three Kings "being in doubt as to how they were to employ the rest of the night, sent word to Nantouillet that they would come to sup with him at the hôtel d'Hercule, situated at the corner of the rue des Augustins. Nantouillet in vain excused himself from receiving such guests as these; he was

forced to obey the King's order and caused the supper to be served. The guests, half drunken, had formed a conspiracy to sack the hôtel d'Hercule; they took possession, as a matter of fact, of the silver plate, forced the coffers and the cupboards, took there everything they found that was of value, and did not leave until they were laden down with booty, despite Nantouillet's protests and supplications. The next day, the rumor ran about that the sum of 50,000 francs, stolen from Nantouillet's strong-box, had been given with great joy, in view of the source from which it came, to the belle of Châteauneuf, in order to recompense her and to avenge her for Nantouillet's refusal of her hand. Nantouillet went to lay a complaint before the first President of Parliament, who, before proceeding further in this affair, drew up a set of remonstrances to Charles IX. "Spare yourself the trouble," replied the King, "and give Nantouillet to understand that he will have more than he wants if he is looking for justice." Nantouillet took the hint and withdrew his complaint.

The Duke of Anjou had already broken with Mademoiselle de Châteauneuf, or at least, he had publicly provided her with a rival in the person of the Princess of Condé, whose portrait he wore suspended about his neck. His love for this charming Princess resisted even absence. Upon coming back from Poland to succeed Charles IX, he met his mistress once more; but he had the misfortune to lose her almost at once. Mademoiselle de Châteauneuf then endeavored to resume her sway over the Prince's heart, for the Prince had not ceased to show her great affection. She was once more, for a moment, the King's mistress, although Henri's manners had undergone a sad metamorphosis; she was so intolerant toward the mignons that Henri III recurred to the idea of marrying her off in order to be rid of her. He was himself married to Louise de Vaudemont; he knew that this Princess had been sought after by the Count of Brienne, who had always been greatly taken with her. "Count," he said to him in the tone of a master, "I have come to deprive you of your mistress; but in exchange, I am going to give you my own, and you are going to marry Châteauneuf." This was no pleasantry; and the Count of Brienne could only escape this marriage by hastily leaving the court. The beautiful Châteauneuf was quite content with this; she did not desire a husband, and she did desire always to preserve her title of King's mistress; but she was imprudent enough to appear openly in the lists with the young Queen, and Catherine de'Medici forbade her

to reappear at court. The King would not support her, and when she saw herself abandoned by this Prince, whose mignons had turned him against her, the spite she felt led her to an act of which she speedily repented. This maid, "so whole-hearted and so disdainful," says Brantôme, "that when some clever and gallant man would come to accost her with a proposal of love, she would reply to him so haughtily and with so great a contempt for his proffered affections, with words so arrogant,—for none was better skilled at this than she—that he would not return again—this same maid let herself go with one who obtained of her everything a few days before she was married." It was an Italian named Altoviti, "who was by no means comparable to the other honest gentlemen who had desired to serve her." Two years afterward, having "found him lechering" (*trouvé paillardant*), De l'Estoile says (September, 1577), she slew him "manfully" with her own hand. Henri III cared nothing for any but a titular mistress, and he was rejoiced at being thus delivered from Mademoiselle de Châteauneuf's eternal reproaches; since she was always shaming him for his infamous habits. He did not again fall back under the domination of a woman; nevertheless, despite his "ruffled mignons," he came back from time to time to the first fancies of his youth. He was accused of having impelled his favorite, René de Villequier, to kill his wife (August, 1577), who was pregnant, although her husband had not slept with her for more than ten months before." This lady had for lover the Seigneur de Barbizi, a handsome young Parisian whom she refused to sacrifice to the King's jealousy. "This murder was looked upon as cruel," says De l'Estoile (*Journal de Henri III*, ancient edition), being committed upon a woman who was pregnant with two children, and as strange since it was committed in the house of a King (at Poitiers), His Majesty being there and the court, where lechery is publicly and notoriously practiced among the ladies, who look upon it as a virtue. But the outcome of the affair and the facility with which Villequier obtained a pardon, there being no difficulty whatsoever about the matter, led to the belief that he had, in this matter, merely been carrying out a secret command of the King, as payment to the lady for her refusal in such a case." This last phrase belongs to Pierre Dupuy who, better informed than Pierre de l'Estoile, had placed it in his copy instead of the phrase which exists in the original, where one finds merely: "For a report which had been made to him that she had slandered His Majesty in open company." In a satirical verse-bit

composed at the time upon this tragic event, the “immodest” wife was no more spared than was her “execrable” husband:

*Non l'ire, non, non l'honneur, non quelque humeur jalouse
L'ont fait ensanglanter au sang de son épouse.
D'honneur, en eust-il donc? eut-il esté jaloux
D'une qu'il scavoit bien estre commune à tous,
Et que mesme il avoit nourrie en tous delices,
Adheré, consenty, mille fois, à ses vices? . . .
Va, passant, elle a eu justement le salaire
Que merite à bon droit une femme adultere,
Et luy, soit pour jamais dit l'infame bourreau
De celle dont il fut autrefois macquereau!**

The collection of Sauval, published in 1739, under the title of *Mémoires Historiques Concernant les Amours des Rois de France*, contains a number of anecdotes which go to prove that the mignons were more inclined to women than the King. One day, Henri III “took it in his head to win over the wife of a counsellor of Parliament, not less beautiful than she was virtuous, and having finally come to his ends in his closet in the Louvre, he abandoned her thereafter to his mignons; but this poor lady, then desperate at such an outrage, fell in a spasm and gave up the ghost in their arms.” Another time, la Guiche, one of the mignons, being hopelessly enamoured of Madame Mirande, “matron of tested virtue,” the King did not disdain to serve the interests of his favorite, and attracted this lady to the Louvre under pretext of giving her “*un don sur les coches*.” The solicitous beauty arrived at the hour when the King was at table; she was led into a mysterious closet, and there Henri III himself came to plead La Guiche’s indecent cause. “She was inflexible, and to escape from the danger into which her avidity had precipitated her, she alleged that an inconvenience common to persons of her sex prevented her

*Translator’s Note:—Not wrath, not honor, and not jealous strife
Have caused him thus to shed the blood of wife;
What could he know of honor’s jealous call,
Who knew his wife the property of all,
And also knew he’d made her bed too nice,
And trained her, willingly, in every vice?
Ah, friends, you know she is but justly paid
The wages of adulterous wife or maid.
As for the husband, we will not words skimp:
He’s now her hangman who was once her pimp.

from according what was desired; thereupon he caused her to be taken by two valets, and the rest transpired only too quickly. These Tarquins then let go their Lucrece without hearing or caring to hear the tears of blood with which she wept her violated modesty, and without being concerned for the pity and horror which she inspired in all by her cries and her frightful groans." Another day, it was "the greatest street-walkers of Paris" (*les plus grandes coureruses de Paris*) whom the King caused to be brought in his own *coches* to Saint-Cloud. As soon as they had arrived, he ordered that they should be deprived of their clothing, he then denuded his Swiss guard in similar fashion and turned over to them these unfortunate women, who fled into the gardens with indecent outcries. Accompanied by his mignons and his greatest confidants (*ses plus confidents*), "he took pleasure in considering attentively that which is ordinarily covered with a veil of darkness, in any encounters whatsoever." Such spectacles, horror-inspiring as they are, were not rare at the court on a more restrained scale, and it was not only street-walkers and Swiss guards who were the participants. Brantôme speaks, with a reserve which with him is extraordinary (see the *Dames Galantes*, fourth discourse, article 2, on the Love of Girls), of a "fine" comedy entitled *Le Paradis d'amour*, which was invented by a maid of the court, and which was played by herself in the hall of the Bourbons, behind closed doors, where were only the comedians, who served at once as players and as spectators. There were there but six persons, three women and three men, namely: a prince and his mistress, a lord and a great lady "*de riche matière*," a gentleman and the maid who was the author of the piece: "Certainly, altogether a virgin as she was, she played her rôle as well or possibly better than the married ones; for she had seen the world elsewhere than in her native country, and, as they say in Spanish: *Rafinada en Segovia*, which is to say, 'refined in Segovia,' which is a proverb in Spain, since it is in Segovia that good cloth is refined."

The ladies of the court had only too greatly profited, since the reign of Francis I, from the lessons learned in this school of Prostitution, which never suspended its scandalous sessions; but their misdemeanors, hidden for long in the shadow of the throne, were suddenly revealed to the public eye, when the Reformation and the League tore down in succession all the veils which enveloped the private life of kings and the great. The people's indiscreet gaze now fathomed abysses of depravity until then unknown; and when the hideous truth

became apparent on all sides, each one endeavored to snatch away the last rags and tatters which theretofore had covered it. Thus, in a satirical pamphlet which began to be circulated at Paris in 1587, under the title of *Bibliothèque de Madame de Montpensier*, and which was preserved at that time by Pierre de l'Estoile in his *Registres-Journaux*, a number of imaginary items, which were supposed to be a part of this *Bibliothèque*, make allusion to the unbridled conduct of the ladies and maids at the court. Following are the titles of these pieces which we abstain from commenting on, for they are sufficiently eloquent in themselves: "The Manner of Surveying Briefly the Great Meadows" (*La manière d'arpenter brièvement les grans prés*), by Madame de Nevers. "Grandprez being her squire," adds l'Estoile.—"Secrets in Deflowering Pages" (*Secrets pour depuceler les pages*), by M. de Sourdis.—"The Various Platters of Love" (*Les diverses assiettes d'amour*), translated from the Spanish into French by Madame la Maréchale de Retz for Seigneur de Dunes, her squire.—"The Method of Attending to Every Comer on one Foot" (*Le moyen de besoigner à cloche-pied à tout venant*), by Madame de Montpensier (the lame: *la boiteuse*).—"The Ribaldries of the Court" (*Les ribauderies de la cour*), collected by the Sire of Liancourt, at the instance of Caboche.—"The Snares (or Birdtrap) for the Maids of the Court" (*Le tresbuchet des filles de la cour*), by the Lady of Saint-Martin.—"Treatise on the Buffooneries and Pimperies of the Court" (*Traicté des bouffonneries et maquerellages de la cour*), by the Count of Maulevrier.—"The History of Jehanne the Virgin" (*l'Histoire de Jehanne la Pucelle*), by Mademoiselle de Bourdeille.—"The Rhetoric of Procuresses" (*La rhétorique des maquerelles*), by Madame de la Chastre.*—"Almanac of the Assignations of Love" (*Almanach des assignations d'amour*), by Madame de Pragny.—"The J'en Veux of the Queen's Maids," by Madame de Saint-Martin.—"*Le Foutiquet des demoiselles*," invention of the little La Roche, horseman in ordinary of the peace, etc. We have borrowed these citations sometimes from the edition of Lenglet-Dufresnoy, sometimes from that of the MM. Champollion, without concerning ourselves with the variations which the two editions present. One piece of the same sort of the same period, the "Manifesto of the Ladies of the Court" (*Manifeste des dames de la cour*) may serve as a commentary to some of the titles of these imaginary books. It is

*Translator's Note:—Cf. Aretino, *I Ragionamenti*, "The Art of the Procureess (*Mezzara*)."

a confession of the greatest female sinners, beginning with the Queen-Mother, who accuses herself of having reared her children "in all vices, blasphemies and perfidies" (*en tous vices, blasphèmes et perfidies*) and her daughters "in immodest liberty, suffering and authorizing a brothel at her court" (*en liberté impudique, souffrant et autorisant un bordeau en sa cour*). The Manifesto "given at Charcheau, on a journey to Nérac," and signed *Pericart*, "with permission of Monseigneur, the Archbishop of Lyons," ends thus: "The damsels Victri, Bourdeille, Sourdis, Birague, Surgère and all the rest of the *chou* (*sic*) of the Queen-Mother's maids exclaim all with one voice: 'Ah! my God! What would we do if Thou didst not extend Thy great mercy to us? We cry Thee then in a loud voice to pardon all our sins of the flesh committed with kings, princes, cardinals, gentlemen, bishops, abbots, friars, poets and all other sorts of folk, of all estates, trades, qualities and conditions, even down to mule-drivers, valets, pages and gentlemen's lackeys, thieves, niggards, crop-pates, pock-hides, shriveled skins, and syphilitics. And let us cry, with M. de Villequier: My God! Have mercy, and show us Thy great mercy; and if we cannot find husbands, we must betake us then to the *Filles-Repenties!*' "

We may judge, from this bird's-eye view, how many scandalous adventures there must have been to provide spice for the court chronicles, since at court the old were frequently no wiser than the young; but whatever may have been the relaxation of manners, no pardon was shown those clumsy ones who permitted themselves to be caught in the act. Henri himself had accesses of prudery and severity, when an unfortunate publicity happened to betray the mystery of illicit amours. He wanted to cut off the head of the Seigneur de la Loue, who had an intrigue with La Malherbe, one of the Queen's maids of honor; but he contented himself with making the pair marry whether they would or not, and he sent them to pass their honeymoon in the prison of Vincennes, threatening both of them, as De l'Estoile tells us (22d of March, 1578) "for the outrage and excesses done in the house of the Queen, his wife, he (the bridegroom) having been so presumptuous as to render pregnant one of her maids." Henri IV, who had so many reasons to be indulgent on this score, must needs punish with extreme rigor the Baron of Termes, brother of the Duke of Bellegarde, who found himself in the same plight as the Seigneur de la Loue, "having been surprised" according to De l'Estoile (February, 1604), "lying by night in the chamber of the Queen's maids with La Sagonne, one of the

maids of the said lady, whom he had loved and kept for a long time, she being large with child on his account, and he saving himself wholly naked, save for his shirt." Tallemant des Réaux reports this adventure with variations: "He was possessed of a very amorous manner," we are told in the *Histoire de M. de Termes*. "Nothing made so much stir as the gallantry of one of the Queen-Mother's maids named Sagonne. He went familiarly to sleep with her in the Louvre; the governess gave the alarm, and he leaped out the window, but he left his doublet behind him: this was on the first floor of the Louvre, on the perron. The guards at the gate permitted him to escape, for the crimes of love were readily pardoned." Maria de'Medici, wholly Italian as she was, felt so horribly offended at this terrible scandal that she besought the King to behead the Baron of Termes. Henri IV merely exiled him for a few months and did not force him to wed La Sagonne, who was ignominiously expelled, along with Madame de Drou, governess of the maids, the Queen being inflexible, "as she always was," says De l'Estoile, "where a matter of honor or of chastity was concerned."

Henri IV did not have the right to be too severe in such a case; and while appearing to share the Queen's indignation, he was not too hard upon the lovers who had permitted themselves to be caught. It is even said that, this adventure having attracted attention to La Sagonne, he had straightway conceived the desire of making her acquaintance and of taking advantage of M. de Termes' absence. According to Le Duchat, La Sagonne could have been none other than one demoiselle de la Bourdaisière who figures among Henri IV's mistresses. This Prince was content that his courtiers should imitate him; but he demanded that things should take their course without scandal, and, like Francis I, was always, at least in words, a very gallant knight with regard to the "honor of the ladies." Bassompierre (*Nouveaux Mémoires*, page 171) tells us that: "The King Henri IV had this weakness for women to overcome in himself, that, while being a tolerable monarch in that he did not kidnap girls from their fathers nor wives from their husbands, he still set a very bad example and created scandals, in that he did not hide but caused to be known in public the vices which seemliness bids should be hidden."

We have seen, in the preceding chapter of this History, that the King at need, sacrificed fathers and husbands to his amours and even to his fancies. The manners of the court could not have been any

different from his own. He should be given credit, nevertheless, for having considerably diminished that Italian depravity which the reign of Henri III had fastened like a leprosy upon the young French nobility. Following the publication of the *Hermaphrodites*, in 1605, he pretended to believe that this work had been intended as a satire on his own court, rather than on that of Henri III, and loudly approved Artus Thomas' pamphlet "which discovered," De l'Estoile tells us, "the impious and vicious fashions and manners of the court, causing it clearly to be seen that France is now the den of all vices, pleasure and impudence, whereas formerly she was an academy of honor and a seminary of virtue." We must remember, nevertheless, that *la belle galanterie* begins with the reign of Henri IV and that, if courtly manners were fundamentally corrupt, the mould of court life, if one may put it that way, was frequently respectable and always elegant. The sensual pleasures at this period appeared to be life's chief concern but they came to take on a more refined and decent garb, being surrounded with moral scruples and with a sort of mysticism. The *Astrée* of Honoré d'Urfé had come to serve as a sovereign code for lovers.

The excessive luxury which had invaded the court of Henri IV, although this Prince possessed in a high degree a taste for simplicity, could not have been any too favorable to good morals. It was the Queen, who, in spite of the King, gave the tone to fashion, which became an auxiliary to Prostitution. When we see Gabrielle d'Estrées paying 1900 crowns (12th of November, 1594) for an embroidered handkerchief, we can understand all the things her rivals would have been willing to do in order to possess handkerchiefs as costly. From this source there arose, undoubtedly, a multitude of secretly compromising situations which dishonored those whom coquetry and vanity had impelled to their ruin. Sauval relates, in the *Amours des Rois de France*, a singular anecdote which shows us the shameful traffic which the love of luxury had led to, with respect to the greatest ladies. A grand provost of the King's household, who is not named, had pursued for long a great princess, who likewise is not named. He had met only with refusals and disdain; but finally a bargain was struck, and it was decided that a tapestry which the lady coveted should be the price of one night. The provost had the bad faith the next day to avoid giving the promised tapestry, "for the reason that the night had passed in such a manner, through his own fault, that he had left the bed as he had entered it." The result was an open argument between the part-

ies. The wife of one of the Secretaries of State was chosen as arbiter, and she settled the question by imposing the condition "that they should put the tapestry on the back of a street-porter, and that the Princess should spend one more night with this amorous but too diurnal suitor." Do we not have here one of the most hideous phases of Prostitution at a time when the brothels were being abolished by royal ordinance? Henri III grew highly wroth against Ruscelay when the latter dared to observe to him, à propos of the epidemic of 1584, "that the court was a still greater plague, which the other could not eat away" (see the *Journal de Henri III*, under date of the 19th of October, 1584), but Henri IV would merely have laughed, had he read, in the *Registres-Journaux* of Pierre de l'Estoile (October, 1609), on the occasion of the uproar created by the amours of the Prince of Joinville and the Countess of Moret, the following passage: "Those who at court are looked upon as the wisest and best advised, and who penetrate most deeply the sacred mysteries of the gods (although very frequently they live as humbly as the others), would say that in this fine deed there was a covert design of the King, who had merely done to the Countess that which she had done, and that, with regard to such acts, those of today are so little scrupulous at court that, as Lipsius says in his *Epistles* (I think it is the 22nd): *Mores jam vocentur, nec in veniam modo veniant, sed in laudem.*"*

**Translator's Note*:—"Let them be called manners and not merely pardoned but praised."

CHAPTER LXXVIII

NEVER at any period had France been dishonored by more defilement; never had the people sunk so low in the scale of depravity. The fatal example of court corruption had perverted the moral sense of the nation, and the League completed the destruction of all that remained in the way of modesty among the bourgeois and plebeian classes, whom the excesses, actual or imputed, of Henri of Valois and his mignons had impelled to revolt against a debased royalty. It is to the *Registres-Journaux* of Pierre de l'Estoile, those faithful memoirs of the scandals of Paris for more than thirty-five years, that we must look for the naïvely candid record, even though at times a little malicious, of the misdoings of society at the end of the 16th century. Pierre de l'Estoile, who had lived in the time of Charles IX, does not fear to portray the moral decadence which marked the reign of Henri IV, whom he yet loved and honored as a great King. In a score of passages in his work, this ingenious author speaks in a grieved tone of the "whorishnesses" (*puteries*) and "lecheries" (*paillardises*), and of the debauches and "other vices," which exceeded all limits, and which "were at that time more unrestrained than ever." (See the *Journal de Henri IV*, under date of February, 1607.) "In a highly depraved century such as ours," he says elsewhere (August, 1610), "one wins the reputation of a good man very cheaply; but if only you are a bugger, parricide and atheist, you will not fail to pass for a man of honor!"

It would be difficult to conceive how pernicious was the influence of the League on manners. The people, who had reproached Henri III and his court, with so many abominations, abominations invented or exaggerated by the partisan spirit of the Leaguers or the Huguenots, were not thereby kept from falling into the same excesses, which they brazenly paraded. During all the time that the capital was in the power of the Sixteen, the eyes and ears of the inhabitants of the city were defiled by songs, pamphlets and obscene engravings, which always had for pretext the political policy of the Holy Alliance. "The galleries of the Palace," says D'Aubigné in his *Histoire Universelle* (Volume III, Book II, Chapter 20), "were filled with portraits of the King, trigged out like the Devil, clad in pantaloons, with the postures

of Aretino or worse things even than that;" for since the murder of Guise, Henri III, we are told by the commentator of the *Satyre Menippée* (edition of Ratisbonne, 1726, Volume II, page 346), "passed among the people for a monster, steeped not only in all sorts of vices and debauchery, but also in abominable sorcery." The collections of De l'Estoile are filled with the turpitudes of the Leaguers, which were quite equal to the atrocious calumnies of the Huguenots. Language was degraded and drawn through the mud of the streets; the preachers in the pulpit did not even respect the holy place, but dared there to mingle with their sermons blasphemies, obscene words and disgusting images. There was not a single sermon delivered in which Béarnais was not treated as a "son of a whore" and as a *maquereau*. At a State reception to which the most considerable personages of the League came in a body to salute and harangue the Cardinal of Pelleve, one of these Leaguers, M. de Sermoise, *maître des requêtes*, having remarked that the King of Navarre would, perhaps, abjure heresy and become a Catholic, the Cardinal interrupted him wrathfully by saying: "I do not know whether you are a widower or married; but if you have been or are married, and if you had a wife who had prostituted herself in the brothel, would you care to take her back when she wanted to return? And heresy, my friend, is a whore!"

We have spoken of the scandal caused among the people by the processions of the *battus*, which the King himself conducted at the head of all his court; but the people had come to fancy these fine processions, and as soon as the King had retired behind the Barricades, no further restraint was observed in connection with a species of devotion which came near bordering on the most shameful sensuality. "The 30th of January, 1589," we read in the *Journal des Choses Advenues à Paris depuis le 23 Décembre 1588 jusqu'au Dernier Avril 1589* (cited by Dulaure, *Hist. de Paris*, 12-mo. edition, Volume V, page 345), "there were in the city a number of processions in which many children took part, boys as well as girls, men as well as women, all of whom were nude in their chemises, as fine a sight as one ever saw, *Dieu merci!*" There were some parishes in which as many as six or seven hundred persons wholly nude were to be seen. On the 3rd of February following, there were new and "very handsome" (*forte belles*) processions, "in which there were a great number of persons wholly nude and carrying very comely crosses." On the 14th of February, there were other processions, notably in the parish of Saint-Nicolas-des-

Champs, where there were more than a thousand persons in a state of complete nudity, notably the priests of Saint-Nicolas and their curate, François Pigenat, "who was wholly nude and had nothing but a stomacher (*guilbe*) of white linen upon him." Pierre de l'Estoile, who was an eye-witness of these "handsome" processions of the 14th of February, 1589, had collected on this subject details so abominable that the folio of his original manuscript, codex 452, was destroyed by the Jesuits of Saint-Acheul, in whose hands De l'Estoile's papers remained for long. Nevertheless, a very important passage was permitted to stand, which will give us some edifying information concerning this procession staged by the League. "The people," says De l'Estoile, "were so heated and out of their senses, if one may speak thus, following these devotional processions, that they would frequently rise up in the middle of the night from their beds in order to go seek the priests of their parishes to demand that they be led in procession, as happened in those days to the curate of Saint-Eustache, who was sought out by some of his parishioners at night, and constrained to arise in order thus to lead them, and when he thought to make a show of remonstrance, they called him a 'politician' (*politique*) and a 'heretic,' and he was constrained at last to give them their desire. For the truth is, this worthy curate with two or three others (but no more) in the city of Paris, was opposed to these nocturnal processions for the reason that, to speak frankly, everything there was done in carnival fashion, and men and women, girls and lads would march off pell-mell together, wholly nude, thereupon to engender fruits other than those which had been looked for when these rites were instituted. As a matter of fact, near the Porte Montmartre, the daughter of a bonnet-maker bore such fruit at the end of nine months; and a certain curate of Paris, who a short time before had been heard preaching on the text that the white and downy feet of women in these processions were very agreeable to God, proceeded to plant another, which came to maturity in term-time." (See the edition of the MM. Champollion.)

Was not this the worst sort of Prostitution, thus covered with the mantle of holy things, and brazenly mingled with the practices of devotion? Sauval, who had misread an extract from the *Journal de Henri III*, published in 1621 by Pierre Dupuy, disfigures it utterly in his *Mémoires Historiques et Secrets Concernant les Amours des Rois de France* (page 103, edition of 1739), where he credits Henri III with

the processions of the League and the scandals to which they led. Pierre de l'Estoile had stated that the Knight of Aulme, who "made his shrove-days" (*faisoit ses jours gras*) of these processions, "was ordinarily to be found there," and even in the high-streets and the churches would cast, by means of a pea-shooter, musked comfits to the damsels who were by him recognized and afterward were refreshed by the collations which he furnished them, sometimes upon the pont-au-Change, other times upon the pont-Notre-Dame in the rue Saint-Jacques, la Verrerie and everywhere else; where the holy widow was not forgotten, who, covered only with a fine veil, with an opening at the throat, permitted herself to be carried once through the church of Saint-Jean, and to be flirted with and caressed to the great scandal of a number of devout and worthy persons, who had come in good faith to witness these processions." The damsel of Sainte-Beuve, whom l'Estoile calls "the holy widow" (*la sainte veuve*), was the daughter of André de Hacqueville, first President of the grand council, and a cousin of the Chevalier d'Aulme, who had made of her his mistress. This lady, as remarkable for her beauty as for her light conduct, played a rôle that was indecent enough in these nocturnal processions, which served as a prelude to still more scandalous suppers. It was she who remarked, in speaking of the wives of the good royalists, "that she took a singular pleasure in seeing those damsels smeared with mire on their way to the Bastille to sew up the breeches of their husbands." Pierre de l'Estoile would appear to have copied, almost word for word, everything which he reports concerning la Sainte-Beuve in his *Journal de Henri III*, from a piece of the times entitled: *Conseil Salulaire d'un bon François aux Parisiens*, (Salutary Counsels of a Good Frenchman to the Parisians: see the *Mém. de la Ligue*, ancient edition, Volume III, pages 399 and following). One might infer, from the textual analogy of the two passages, that the *Conseil Salulaire*, which was printed in the month of June, 1589, came from the pen of Pierre de l'Estoile. However this may be, the adventure of La Sainte-Beuve in the church of Saint-Jean, where "no respect was shown either for the place or for the company with respect to certain caresses," had given rise to so much scandal that the processions were not resumed. They did not bob up again until the 24th of January; but the number of nude paraders had by then diminished, and there were to be seen merely the young Jesuit collegians, who were entirely nude, to the number of three hundred. (See the *Journal des Choses*

Advenues à Paris, quoted by Dulaure; for the *Journals* of Pierre de l'Estoile do not even mention this last procession.)

The Leaguers, who had made so much fuss about the dissolute manners of the court, themselves set an example of the most shameless debauchery. "Today," wrote the honest De l'Estoile, in April, 1589, "to play the brigand with his neighbor, to massacre those nearest him, to rob altars, profane churches, violate women and girls and ransack everything in sight is the common practice of a Leaguer and the infallible mark of a zealous Catholic." The author of the *Conseil Salulaire d'un bon François aux Parisiens* merely repeats, almost in the same terms, this implication of Pierre de l'Estoile with reference to the heroes of the League: "Violations of women and girls of all ages," he says, "even in the holy temples, and sacrileges at the altars, all that is but sport for them; all that is prowess and gallantry; it is essentially the *form* of a good Leaguer." The majority of the details relative to the excesses of all sorts committed by the Leaguers are to be found at once in the *Conseil Salulaire* and in the *Journal de Henri III*, as though these two works had been prepared by the same hand. When the Duke of Mayenne, at the head of an army of the Alliance, invaded the suburbs of Tours and threatened that city (Monday, 8th of May, 1589,) "there were found some forty or fifty women as well as girls, hidden in a cave, all of whom were violated, as was done throughout the rest of this suburb; and even in the church, some women and girls, who had taken refuge there as in a place of safety, were raped in the presence of their husbands and of their fathers and mothers, whom the executioners compelled to act as witnesses, in order to heighten the outrage. "I saw the following day," adds the author of the *Conseil Salulaire*, "the beds which were still in the square, where the vicar told me he had seen women and girls dragged along by the hair of their head and thrown down." When the Knight of Aulme, cousin of the Duke of Mayenne, was pillaging the neighborhood of Paris, where he had his general headquarters, "he entered into certain houses, where he found only a few ladies and damsels, women of honor and of virtue, whom, in the absence of their husbands, gentlemen of good heart and of quality, he took by force; and after having violated them, he abandoned them to his soldiers." In those unhappy times, the soldiers, to whatever side they happened to belong, whether they were Huguenots or Catholics, Leaguers or Royalists, regarded as the best part of their spoils the women and girls who were to be found in a

captured city, and it was practically impossible to prevent them from employing horrible violence upon the unfortunate ones who might fall into their hands. Frequently, in the space of a few days, a city or village would pass alternately into the hands of two belligerent parties, and each occupation of the place would lead to new *violenens*; so that the inhabitants merely changed executioners. The royal army, which in 1589 occupied the villages adjoining Paris, in order to complete the blockade of the capital, had perhaps equalled the army of the League in the matter of atrocious *forceneries*. In the *Discours Véritable de l'Estrange et Subite Mort de Henry de Valois* (Troyes, Jean Moreau, 1589, in-8), the author, who describes himself as a monk of the order of Jacobins, accuses the King of spreading "the vomit of his wrath" (*le vomissement de sa rage*) in all the cities, such as Pontoise, Poissy, Étampes, Saint-Cloud, etc., which he had invaded with his soldiery. "The girls, even those of tender age," he goes on to say, "and the religious, have been violated, even raped." Five years later, when the Duke of Mayenne desired to have his army under the walls of Paris in order to be ready to sustain a siege and even to give battle, (December, 1693), De l'Estoile tells us that "the suburbs of Paris were filled with soldiers who there committed a thousand villainies and insolences, even raping old women, and girls of ten years and up, from which resulted many complaints but no punishment."

The tribunals were powerless against the soldiery, who owed their impunity to the complicity of their leaders, and who, moreover, would have treated judges and judicial agents with as little regard as they did the good folk whom they molested to suit their fancy. But where there was something more than martial law, and where the civil authority had resumed its rights, the acts of violence which were committed among the people, and which reached the attention of the magistrates, were promptly and severely punished. It cannot be denied that the abominable example set by the soldiery had frequently exerted the most corrupting influence over perverse individuals, who felt that they were authorized, in times of peace as of war, to give full reign to their brutal passions. Thus, rape was one of the most frequent crimes of this period, and it occasionally took on, according to circumstance, a particularly ferocious character. This crime, the fact must be recognized, was never more prevalent than since the closing of the houses of debauchery and the abolition of legal Prostitution. It was necessary for the Parliament of Paris vigorously to redouble its efforts

in order to diminish the number of assaults on women and especially on children. "On Tuesday, the 23d of December, 1603," we read in the *Journals* of Pierre de l'Estoile, "there was hanged in the place de Grève, the servant maid of one Depras, an usher of the fifth chamber of inquiries, for having sold and delivered into the hands of a certain young man a very beautiful girl of her house, aged only from nine to ten years, whom this miserable wretch, being her guardian, had villainously ruined, to the great displeasure and regret of the said Depras, her father, and of all her relatives." But there is no evidence that the perpetrator of the rape was discovered and punished. Justice, in such a case, showed no indulgence respecting the quality of the persons involved, for in 1607, a notary of Paris named De Nesmes, "having unfortunately raped a little girl of the age of five or six years, daughter of Dufresnoy, the apothecary, had taken refuge in Flanders, where he believed himself free from criminal pursuit." His extradition was obtained by the King, spurred on by the "enormity" of the crime to seek the culprit's punishment. This notary, subjected to an ordinary and extraordinary examination, steadfastly refused to admit his guilt, and inasmuch as he was accused by but a single witness, he could only be condemned to banishment. During the horrible tortures to which he was subjected, he never ceased to protest his innocence. "Ah! Would to God," exclaimed the counsellor Faideau, who conducted the interrogation, "would to God that you were as innocent of all sin as I am assured that you are guilty of this act, being certain that none other than you committed it! But you have the gift of gab (*bec*), which stands you in good stead!" Rapes of this sort occurred incessantly in Paris, but they did not all come to light, for the relatives of the victim would frequently consent not to lodge a complaint, in view of the payment of a sum of silver, becoming thus accomplices to the attack which had been made on the person of a child. Pierre de l'Estoile informs us that, in the month of August, 1607, "there was made a prisoner at Paris and sent to the prisons of the Abbaye the prior of the *Fratti ignorant*, for having forced a little girl aged only five and a half, daughter of a currier of the suburb of Saint-Germain-des-Pres;" but he does not tell us that this wretch paid the penalty for his crime. When the complaining party, appeased by the payment of money, would abandon the prosecution and declare himself satisfied, Parliament would sometimes drop the affair in order to avoid scandal.

On the other hand, there was one abominable crime which obtained neither grace nor mercy, when denounced by public rumor to the tribunals. This was the crime of bestiality, the penalty for which was fixed at 90 pounds, 12 ducats and 6 carlins in the book of Taxes of the court of Rome; it always carried with it the death-penalty in France; yet this strange crime, which should have disappeared with barbarism, appeared, on the contrary, to be on the increase at the end of the sixteenth century. Jurisprudence was the same with regard to this monstrous aberration in all the parliaments of France: the man or woman who was guilty was burned along with the beast. Claude Lebrun de la Rochette, learned juriconsult, in his work entitled: *Les Procès Civil et Criminel* (Rouen, Jacq. Hollant, 1647, quarto), thus sets forth the motives for the condemnation and punishment of the beast: "These animals are not punished thus for any fault of their own, but for having been the instruments of so execrable a crime, by reason of which the life of a reasoning person is taken away; being a thing unworthy of the sight of man, after so signal a wickedness, and for the reason that the animal will always revive the memory of the act, which should be done away with so far as possible; and this is why it is the sovereign courts very frequently order that the records of the trial of such delinquents be burned along with them, in order, to extinguish the memory of everything connected with them." These wise precautions, the frightful concomitants of punishment, the horror which everywhere attached to the "damnable and brutal cohabitation of man or woman with a brute beast," the unrelenting rigor of the indignant magistrates—all were yet powerless to prevent this crime from spreading, not only in the country, but also in the cities. In the *Comtes* of the provost of Paris, collected at the end of the *Antiquités* of that city by Sauval (Volume III, page 387), we come upon curious details concerning the execution of one Gillet Soulart, who was burned at Corbeil with a sow in 1465. Dulaure, in his *Histoire de Paris* (Volume IV, 12 mo. edition, page 563), audaciously advances the theory that this Soulart was a priest; but this assertion is by no means borne out by the extract upon which Dulaure bases it. There it is stated merely that Gillet Soulart was executed "for his demerits," and that the expenses of the execution amounted to 9 pounds, 16 sous and 4 Parisian deniers, that is to say: 22 sous, "for having borne the trial of the said Gillet in the city of Paris and for having had him seen and visited by Counsel;" 2 sous "for three pints of wine which were

brought to the scaffold for those who dug the trenches for the gibbet and the sow;" two sous, "for the gibbet (*attacat*) of 14 feet in length or thereabouts;" 6 pounds, 12 deniers to Henriet Cousin, executioner of high justice, "for two trips which he made to the city of Corbeil;" 2 sous, 1 denier "for three pints of wine which were brought to the Court for the said Henriet and Soulart, with a loaf of bread;" 7 sous, 4 deniers, for the keep of the said sow for eleven days, at the price of 8 Parisian deniers for each day;" 40 Parisian sous to Robinet and Henriet, known as the brothers Fouquiers, "for five hundred faggots picked up at the port of Morsant and brought to the Court of Corbeil."

Dulaure, who had sought analogous documents in the manuscript criminal archives of Tournelle, cites two other punishments for the crime of bestiality, from codices 84 and 105. Guyot Vuide was hanged and burned on the 26th of May, 1546, "for cohabitation with a cow which was clubbed before the execution." Jeanne la Soille was likewise burned alive on the 5th of January, 1556, with a she ass, which was also clubbed, *par faveur*, before being cast upon the pyre. Pierre de l'Estoile cites but a single execution of this sort in the *Journal de Henri III*; but he reports a number which took place during the reign of Henri IV. We may conclude from this that the policing of morals was conducted at that time with a greater degree of care, and that the tribunals, comprised of so many enlightened and respectable men, had taken upon themselves the task of correcting the depravity of the age. "Sometime before," wrote Pierre de l'Estoile, in the month of August, 1607, "there was committed a prodigious act, surpassing in abomination all preceding ones; which was that of a man who, having had the company of a mare, had had by her two offspring; for which abomination, having been condemned to be burned alive along with the mare, upon the culprit's being summoned to Paris, the sentence was confirmed by decree of Parliament, and he was sent back to his own country to be executed and as for the two offspring, it was ordained that the Sorbonne should be assembled to decide what was to be done with them." De l'Estoile has unfortunately neglected to record the verdict of the Sorbonne, and we do not know whether these two offspring were burned along with the infamous father or not. We are forced, however, to doubt, not the good faith of the chronicler, but the reality of the extraordinary fact which he had reported in his journals. A little further on, under date of the month of November of the same year, he writes in his journal: a young lad condemned in this month at

La Tournelle to be hanged and strangled for having had copulation with a mare, the mare being clubbed at the foot of the scaffold." Different decrees relating to the same crime have been cited by French criminologists, notably by Papon in his *Recueil d'Arrests Notables du Cours Souveraines de France*. Lebrun de la Rochette, who prepared his treatise on the *Procès Criminel* in the time of Henri IV, reports a decree of the Parliament of Paris, rendered on the 15th of December, 1601, "against Claudine de Culam, native of Rozay in Brie, accused and convicted of having committed this bestiality with a dog, who was hanged, strangled and afterward burned with the dog. This decree is reported by M. Chenue; and the past year, 1609, by decree of the Parliament of Dombes, there was executed in the city of Trevois a villager convicted of intercourse with a cow."

The frequency of these frightful trials and the not less horrible executions that followed, we may repeat, show that the French magistrates, frightened by the corruption of manners, were laboring unceasingly to remedy this state of affairs by inspiring a salutary terror in debauchees and in all enemies of public morality. Thus, while it was well enough for those guilty of sodomy and the hideous crimes attaching to it to boast of their impunity at court, they were still pursued with an extreme rigor, when they fell under the notice of civil or ecclesiastical justice. It would seem that, during the reign of Henri III and his mignons, the death-penalty was not applied to a crime which had taken shelter, so to speak, in the shadow of the throne. Pierre de l'Estoile relates, under date of the 30th of January, 1586, that a Piedmontese physician of Abbeville, who was married and named De Sylva, had been a prisoner for more than a year at the Conciergerie, "from cause of sodomy, with which he was charged by his wife herself," when he assassinated one of his prison comrades at the jailor's table. This madman, locked up in a dungeon, strangled himself by swallowing "pellets" (*pelotes*) made of the shreds of his shirt; his cadaver underwent the punishment which his crimes had merited: it was drawn by the tail of a horse through the streets of Paris to the sewer, where it was strung up by the feet. In the *Remonstrances Très-Humbles au Roy de France et de Pologne*, published in 1588, the author, who was a good Royalist rather than a Leaguer, cries out with bitterness: "Shall I speak of the sodomies which are commonly committed?" It was Henri IV who enjoined Parliament to show no pity toward such turpitudes, and who restored the former

penalty for the offense. "On Tuesday, the 12th of November, 1596," says De l'Estoile, "there were burned at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, two sodomites who had vilified and ruined two pages of M. le Prince." This odious vice, despite the example of courtiers, had made little progress among the people, who looked upon it as an honor to be free of what they always referred to as an Italian vice. Henri IV, notwithstanding the striking reprobation with which he branded these shameful misdemeanors, still could not succeed in purging his court of them. "Sodomy, which is the abomination of abominations," wrote De l'Estoile in 1607, "still reigns there to such a degree that it is best to keep one's hands in one's trousers. . . . God has given us a Prince quite unlike Nero, that is to say, one who is good, just, virtuous and God-fearing, and one who naturally abhors this abomination. But this Prince does not find any in his court, either cardinal, bishop, almoner, confessor, priest, or Jesuit, who even open their mouths (although it is their proper duty) to speak and remonstrate somewhat with His Majesty, from fear that they may incur the ill-will of a few great ones, who are called the 'Gods of the court.'" The evil became still more aggravated in the course of the following reign, and no efficacious remedies were found for it; but the nation at large, protected by a noble sentiment of human dignity, did not sink so low as to yield to this deplorable variety of Prostitution.

The laws destined to safeguard manners and to punish all forms of fornication were very rigorous, but they were not always enforced in equal measure. Some of them even left it to the judge to decide the penalty in view of circumstances which might be alleged for or against the accused. Thus, rape and seduction might be punished by death, even though the guilty party offered to atone for his crime by marriage. In 1583, the Parliament of Paris condemned to the gallows a clerk of the palace who had rendered pregnant the daughter of a president of the *enquêtes*, even though this girl, aged twenty-five years, declared that she was willing to marry her seducer. (See the *Arrests Notables of la Rocheflavin*, Book III, page 293.) A *maître des comptes* whom Pierre de l'Estoile does not name, merely stating that he was of the city of Rennes in Brittany, was condemned to marry a widow, to whom he had given a child under promise of marriage. "It was stated in the terms of the decree (which is a very remarkable thing) that he should marry her at once, or, failing to do so, that at two o'clock of the afternoon, he should have his head cut off, which thing he was con-

strained to do, and they were married that morning (18th of September, 1604), in the church of Saint-Bartélmy, at eleven o'clock." The President, Mole, pronounced the decree in these words: "Either you shall die, or you shall wed, such is the will and decision of this court."

It was principally in trials of this sort that justice was sometimes too accessible to influences of various kinds. The credit of a great lord could frequently cause the scales to rise or fall on the score of a vengeance, a lechery or some other interest. In cases having to do with the policing of morals, Prostitution too frequently contrived to dominate the decision of the judges, who would look with complacency upon some powerful person, or who would secretly follow the dictates of their own passions. Pierre de l'Estoile cites a saddening example of these miscarriages of justice. He saw at the Conciergerie, in 1609, a poor woman, who, for more than twelve years, had futilely prosecuted in all the courts the corrupter and the assassin of her daughter. This daughter was not more than five years old when she had been violated by a man to whose care the mother had entrusted her. The unhappy little creature, who was found to have been "ruined by the syphilis" (*gâtée de la grosse vérole*), had afterwards died of it in the hands of the barbers and surgeons. Not only was the grief-stricken mother unable to obtain the punishment of the infamous perpetrator of the rape, but she herself was condemned to be flogged, as guilty of neglect with regard to the innocent victim, and was refused all pecuniary indemnification for the wrong which had been done her in the loss of her child. What was more, the counsellor, Baron, who made a report in this case, did not hesitate to affirm that it was the mother herself "who, with her finger, or with some sort of bolt (*cheville*), had ruined and corrupted her daughter, and also that with such instruments the syphilis or chancres (*poulains*) cannot be conveyed, as appears by the reports of the surgeons and matrons, dated the 24th of July, 1599." De l'Estoile, who had come upon a copy of this report, preserved it as he said, "as a memorial to the exemplary justice of our age!"

Pierre de l'Estoile has preserved in his *Journals* a still more remarkable instance of the judicial favoritism of his time. It is a precious document, and one to be added to that chapter in which we have treated of Prostitution in the confessional: "On Wednesday, the 8th of July, 1609, there was hanged and strangled, in the place de Grève, at Paris, a true rascal, named Lanoue, pimp by profession, who had espoused a certain lass, and who was convicted of incest with his

wife's sister, with whom he ordinarily slept, and who was herself a wench who deserved to share the scaffold with her brother-in-law; but she was let off with being condemned to banishment and to the lash, which she had at the foot of the scaffold. It was said that M. the President of Jambeville, moved by her beauty and extreme youth, since she was not more than fifteen or sixteen years old, had been the cause of saving her life, the judges nearly all having been in favor of death. And it is to be noted that as soon as she was free, she was placed in a carriage which was waiting, and which had been sent expressly for her, since women of her quality (even at the present time) are never lacking in favor and good acquaintance." The carriage which came to take this woman from the executioner's hands had undoubtedly been sent by the President, to whom the fustigated beauty owed her life. This magistrate, whose great rigor and firmness Mézeray praises (*Abr. Chronol. de l'Histoire de France*, in April, 1602), had won distinction by the terrible executions which he sanctioned against women of evil life. It was he who remarked to President Séguier, in speaking of the mystic writings of St. Theresa, which had begun to be translated and published in France: "You and I have caused to be lashed fifty procuresses at Paris who did not deserve it so well as this Mother Theresa of whom they speak so highly!" (See the *Journal de Henri IV*, under 30th of July, 1608.)

The Parliament of Paris, which declined to pardon the vile purveyors of Prostitution, and which punished very gravely all excitations to debauchery, appeared, however, to wink at bad books and obscene engravings, which were publicly sold, even in the corridors of the palace. Never, at any period, had the pen and pencil been more licentious, and yet all this resulted in no prosecution whatsoever of the authors, artists, printers and peddlers. Each one had the right to publish, without restriction, all the smut, written or pictorial, which could possibly outrage modesty and defile the imagination, provided that in these *salauderies* and these *fadèses*, as they were called, there was not the faintest touch of heresy or atheism. One would have said that the morality and decency of good folk could not be offended by immoralities and indecencies in literature and in art; thus there were to be seen exposed in the shops of the print-merchants the Figures of Aretino, and in the book stores, the obscene poems of Signognes, of Morin, of Théophile, etc., which were later collected in various volumes under the titles of *La Muse Folâtre*, *Muses Gaillardes*, *Cabi-*

net Satyrique, etc. The ingenious Pierre de l'Estoile does not blush to jot down this note in his *Journals*: "On Tuesday, the 19th of August, 1608, I have bought for 60 sous some little pictures and new Figures of Aretino, made by Tempesta at Rome, villainous, filthy and indecent beyond measure, which commonly pass here under the name of the Loves of the Gods. There were fourteen of them, which everybody found to be well done, although there can be no such thing as good work where evil is concerned, and I have had them exchanged at D. L. N., with great regret, since I look upon them as a sample of the virtue of this our modest century." De l'Estoile collects also, with a frantic curiosity, all the smuttily facetious pieces in prose and in verse which were freely printed at this time, and which were sold in the streets and public squares, notably in the place de Dauphine, which was constructed a short while later. The police paid no attention to these countless and ephemeral squibs, which were the delight of the lower classes as they were of the great lords. Two or three mad libertines, like the Comte de Permission and Maître Guillaume, were permitted to wander throughout the city, offering to passers-by for a few sous certain booklets of their own composition, containing infamous engravings and full of intolerable blackguardisms. The sale of these booklets was considerable, and no one had any fault to find; the purchased volume was tossed into the fire as soon as one had laughingly leafed through it.

We meet, nevertheless, in the *Journals* of De l'Estoile, with one case of a book's being seized, that of Sanchez' treatise, *De Matrimonio*, which an ordinance of Parliament placed on the index in 1607, "for being an abominable book, and the reading of it being evil and pernicious." De l'Estoile happened to be in the book-shop of Adrien Perrier when the police-commissioner Langois came there "to forbid him to expose or sell in the future to any person whatsoever" that great folio which had been printed and reprinted openly, and which had been sold everywhere until there was discovered at the end of the work a complete doctrine of sodomy. De l'Estoile, who hastened to purchase the forbidden book, avows that the Jesuit, Sanchez, there "treats exquisitely of that fine art of sodomy, but so villainously, and so abominably that the very paper on which I write blushes; moreover, he is a man who appears to have had a deal of experience at the trade." This book of Sanchez' would not have been banned, in spite of all that it contained, had the author been a friar or a Capuchin rather than a

Jesuit. But in all the books published by the Jesuits, a search was made for some maxim dangerous to the lives and authority of kings. There was a general distrust of the Society of Jesus, its doctrines and its writings. Thus, De l'Estoile, who had bought the great volume of Sanchez' bound in parchment, for eight francs, "because I love the Jesuits," as he sardonically adds, justifies his purchase by saying that he wished to have this book "not because the subject pleases me, but to be able to testify more and more to the good life and sane doctrines of these new prophets through their own writings, which I have collected from the same source, and which I have piled up with the others, and which will be found collected there in goodly number." At the very moment when the Parliament and the Sorbonne were causing Sanchez' work to be seized at Paris, the third or fourth edition was being printed of the *Somme des Péchés et le Remède d'Iceux* of the Breton friar, Jean Benedicti, which had appeared at Lyons in 1584, and which had not in the least aroused the scruples of the Church or of the magistrates. This mystical treatise, which the author had had the impertinence to dedicate to the Holy Virgin, contained, nevertheless, more infamous filth than did the treatise *De Matrimonio*. It is true that Père Benedicti, in his immodest lucubrations, had been less indulgent than Sanchez toward sodomy; for he classes with the seven mortal sins the case of a husband who so conducts himself towards his wife, a practice which the Jewish rabbis endeavored to justify in these terms, which we borrow from the Latin translation, since the friar's French, in the words of Brantôme, who himself was scandalized at it, "sounds very badly to chaste and honest ears:" *Duabus mulieribus apud synagogam conquestis se fuisse a viris suis cognitu sodomico cognitis, responsum est ab illis rabbinis: Virum esse uxoris dominum, proinde posse uti ejus utcunque libuerit, non aliter quam is qui piscem emit: ille enim tam anterioribus quam posterioribus partibus, ad arbitrium vesci potest.** The majority of confessional guides and canonical treatises on cases of conscience were no more restrained than the *Sodome des Péchés* of Pere Benedicti, and good Catholics did not think of taking offense at them.

**Translator's Note:*—The sense is: to two women who had appeared at the synagogue with a query as to whether or not it was lawful to have unnatural relations (practice sodomy) with their husbands, the rabbis replied that the husband was the woman's master and might, therefore, make use of her as he saw fit, just as might one who had purchased a fish at the market.

The carelessness of the magistrates with respect to obscene books had led to a deluge of works of this sort, which were to be found scattered in profusion, not only about Paris, but also throughout the provinces. The presses at Rouen, Lyons, Poitiers and a number of other cities unceasingly vomited forth a multitude of filthy and licentious pleasantries, which the packmen or the *bisouards* and merchants carried even to the most remote hamlets. These samples of old French wit exercised an unfortunate influence over Gallic manners, all the more so for the reason that they passed from hand to hand without distinction of age or sex. The police saw no cause to bestir themselves in the matter, so long as religion and royalty were not affected. One of these merry works, the most famous of all, *Le Moyen de parvenir*, which saw the light about 1609 or 1610, ran through two or three almost simultaneous editions, and despite the audacity of many heretical statements which smelled of the stake, this collection of *contes gaillardes* and brazen *gaudrioles* was not suppressed by the ecclesiastical censorship nor by ordinance of the King nor by act of Parliament; the author, Beroalde de Verville, who, although Canon of Tours, had always possessed a secret sympathy for the Reformation and for reformers, was not even alarmed; he had not put his name upon the title page of his *Moyen de Parvenir*, but the name of the author was well known, and the canonical chapter, of which Beroalde was a member, saw no need of denouncing to the Archbishop of Tours this libertine who had been inspired by the writings of Rabelais, and who had even, it was said, availed himself of an unpublished work of *Maître François*. Assuredly the *Moyen de Parvenir*, that "fine collection of authentic mysteries," is not less bold than the *Gargantua* and the *Pantagruel*; it is, also, a good deal dirtier, a good deal more cynical; and yet, it did not arouse the ire of the Sorbonne or of Parliament. It was the blackguardisms and the filthy passages in it which saved the author, whereas both would have been burned if the age had been one less given to sorry jests, to satires and to *contes gras*. These tales, in which monks and nuns played the ordinary rôle attributed to them by popular malice since the beginning of convents, were not, we must admit, any more strange or more scandalous than the deeds which took place every day under the eyes of the readers of the *Moyen de Parvenir*. Pierre de l'Estoile, who prides himself upon writing contemporary history, and who merely sets down curiously the rumors of the city and the court, reports in his *Journal*, in February, 1610, an

adventure of which Beroalde might have made use, without changing a word, in his joyous *Moyen de Parvenir*: "A good lady of this city, who a short while before had taken her place among the *Filles Repentie*, stated and confessed these past days, to a friend of mine who went to see her, that from the second night she had entered there she had had the company of a priest, who had slept between another penitent and herself, and that they did not rebel at such duties as these, provided they were rendered to priests and those of the church: which is the reason they are called the 'consecrated ones' (*consacrés*). The same one told me that a man of quality of this city had frequently wished to debauch him by leading him into such a community of women, telling him that he might there enjoy himself at his ease and sleep with whom he pleased, even at Longchamp and at Gif, more freely than in the most notorious brothel of the city of Paris."

Although De l'Estoile put faith in the statements of his friend, whom he had always known as "a God-fearing man," we may still brand as an exaggeration this tale which rests only on hearsay. It is a known fact, however, that the "*religions de femmes*" were so relaxed in discipline at this period that it became necessary to reform the majority of them in the course of the seventeenth century. This relaxation and the disorders which were its natural consequences dated back to the civil wars, and especially to the League, when the convents constantly had to lodge soldiers and sometimes had to undergo the sorry fate of a city taken by assault; but ordinarily, the Leaguers entered into a bargain with the nuns, and the latter offered to the soldiers of the Holy Alliance a hospitality that was wholly fraternal; the abbess or prioress would set the example to her nuns, and provided she was not too old and ugly, she herself would soon be on good terms with the leader of the band. Followed then banquets, songs and orgies, which kept up as long as the household of the daughters of the Lord were furnished with a garrison. When the time came to separate after this gay life, the gentlemen would remount their horses to go seek the enemy, while the sisters would then find time to return to their religious duties and the rule of the community. Then, the following day, perhaps another troop, of Catholics this time, would pass by, and the convent would receive its new guests with the same fervor and the same urbanity. We have seen how Henri IV and his officers had established themselves, with all the rights of war, in the abbeys of Maubuisson, of Longchamp and of Montmartre.

We can understand how the habit of living with soldiers had terribly impaired monastic chastity. The nuns had become so thoroughly accustomed to this voluptuous and worldly existence that they did not fear to break their vows and to abandon the cloistral régime. While Paris was in the hands of the League, in 1593, "nothing else was to be seen at the Palace and everywhere," says Pierre de l'Estoile, "but gentlemen and nuns coupled together and making love." These shameless nuns who took strolls with their lovers in the public squares, "as villainous and disorderly in words as all the rest," wore under their veils, which they had reserved as the sole index to their profession, "the true costume of whores and courtezans, being rouged, musked and powdered." The preachers thundered in vain against this scandal, and Pierre Commolet, who tore his hair like a madman in the pulpit, when he came to refer to these unfortunate sinners as "*vilaines*" and "*putains*," proceeded to denounce their accomplices as "villainous ruffians" (*vilains ruffiens*) and "buffoons," crying out in a loud voice that the people ought to stone them and to throw mud in their faces, as they did to women of evil life and those vile debauchees who dared to show their faces by the light of day outside the dens of Prostitution.

CHAPTER LXXIX

THE ordinance of 1560, which had decreed "the abolition of the brothels," continued in force, although it was not very rigorously carried out; but from time to time, a series of energetic measures against Prostitution and the despicable agents of Prostitution furnished striking proof that the principle of the prohibitive law was not readily to be abandoned by the magistrates, who believed that public morality was concerned with the enforcement of such a law. Nevertheless, the system of absolute prohibition regarding places of debauchery had produced effects altogether as deplorable as those attributed to these retreats. The number of lost women had not diminished; one might even assert that it had increased; the great brothels of old had been suppressed, but a host of others, hidden away in the shadows or disguised under appearances less suspect, had been secretly opened. It may readily be conceived that these *cagnards*, as they were then called, were no longer under the eye and dictatorship of the municipal administration, but had become infamous houses and horrible cut-throat resorts, where those unfortunate ones who permitted themselves to be lured there frequently lost their purses, their cloaks, and even their lives. As to their health, there was not so much as a chance to escape, and the venereal malady, the most horrible and the most incurable ever known, stalked day and night in these dives. There were many of the prostitutes who were flogged, branded and shorn, and condemned to perpetual banishment; there were procuresses who were promenaded upon an ass, placed in the pillory and condemned to a fine; there were ruffians and *berlandiers* who were fustigated, imprisoned and sent to the galleys; but the punishment inflicted upon one did not render another more wise; and in spite of all efforts to lay the plague of Prostitution, that plague incessantly extended its ravages in the cities, and appeared to brave all the efforts of human foresight and wisdom.

The facts were all too greatly in favor of the necessity of legal Prostitution as an escape. Legislators recoiled before this scandalous necessity, not daring to touch the ordinance of Charles IX; but at the same time, as we have already said, while all the while maintaining the principle of the law, they did not refuse to bend it to the point of

"tolerating" the brothels. We do not know at what period this tolerance was admitted into local police regulations. It may be supposed, however, that it prevailed in Paris during the reign of Henri III. We find, in the documents of the end of the sixteenth century, formal mention of certain brothels, which were so notorious that they could not have existed without the tacit authorization of the provost and of the Châtelet of Paris. Pierre de l'Estoile, in a passage of his *Journals*, which we have cited above, makes allusion to "the most notorious brothel" of the capital, but does not name it. We do not know, therefore, in what places "tolerated" Prostitution had its elected domicile, but we are disposed to believe that the streets and squares which it had affected in the past, as a special privilege, gradually fell back under its yoke. And yet, these bad places, the number of which had been well restricted, and which were subjected to a certain inside surveillance, were not longer sufficient for the shameful needs of a lubricious populace. Prostitution, in place of staying within the limits which had been set it, in place of accepting the secret patronage of the Parisian police, no longer knew any bounds, but proceeded to invade all streets, all quarters and all houses of the city. It possessed, above all, contagious centers in the Courts of Miracles, where it set up for itself an asylum inaccessible to the law; it was there that vice might with impunity brave public modesty; it was there that crime might wash its bloody hands in the mire of debauchery.

The abolition of the brothels was partly responsible for this deplorable state of affairs; many enlightened and pious men thought as much, but were careful not to say so. Michel de Montaigne, who was in the habit of speaking out on all subjects, still has not dared to give us his opinion on this serious question of morality and public policy; but we may presume that his advice would have been conformable to that which he attributes to "certain ones" (*aucuns*), in the following passage of his *Essays*, published for the first time in 1580 (Bordeaux, 2 volumes, octavo): "What we know as 'decency', " he says (Book II, Chapter 12), "which consists in not doing openly that which it is decent to do under cover, they (the stoics) term 'stupidity'; and to be mincing and to disavow that which nature, custom and our desires publish and proclaim with regard to our actions, is a thing that they look upon as a vice: yet, as they see it, it would be an insult to the mysteries of Venus to expose these latter to the public view, and to

draw these sports beyond the curtain would be to degrade them: the important thing being shame, concealment, reserve, circumspectness, all parties to esteem: pleasure very ingeniously lends itself to this, under the mask of virtue, in order not to be prostituted at street corners, trampled under foot and given over to the sight of common eyes, having something to say there respecting the dignity and convenience of its accustomed closets. Wherefore, some say that to do away with the public brothels is not only to spread lechery everywhere, which would otherwise have been assigned to that place, but is also to sharpen vagabond and idle men to this vice. Montaigne, as a former member of the Parliament of Bordeaux, was not in a position to come out openly against the law, which was looked upon as one of the most excellent to be found in French jurisprudence, and which was every day applied at some point in the realm; but he possessed too lofty, too politic and too philosophic a view of things not to deplore a remedy which was worse than the evil.

Montaigne, accordingly, was not the one to raise his voice by way of pleading the cause of legal Prostitution in the interest of public morals and demanding the reëstablishment of those privileges which debauchery of old had enjoyed. It was, it is said, a learned minister of the reformed religion, Pierre Victor Palma Cayet, who conceived the idea that it might be a good thing to give vice a circumscribed and limited domain, upon the assumption that it might there spend its venom without infecting the healthy portion of the population. Cayet, born of poor parents at Montrichard in Touraine, had acquired a very extensive training in all the sciences, even those which were commonly looked upon as occult and diabolic; he had studied magic, and boasted of being able to communicate with the Devil, who had conferred upon him the gift of tongues. It was his immense learning rather than his demonomania that had caused him to be attached as preacher to the house of the Princess Catherine of Navarre. He had already composed a number of works on magic, religious polemics and history, when the idea came to him of posing as a reformer of morals and of publishing a *Discourse Contenant le Remède Contre les Dissolutions Publiques, Présenté à Messieurs du Parlement*. This Discourse was, according to him, merely a translation or paraphrase of an Italian work printed fifteen or twenty years before under this title: *Discorso del Remedio delle Publiche Dissolutioni*, published under the name of the celebrated Nicolo Perroto, Archbishop of Siponto. It is probable

that Cayet had not been content with translating his author, but that he had put much of himself into this apology for legal Prostitution. It has been asserted that Cayet was leading then a very debauched life, and "that he had betaken himself not very decently to a certain damsel's place." This accusation, formulated by Coloniés, in his *Gallia Orientalis* (page 144), has no direct relation to the project which the preacher of Madame Catherine then cherished with regard to making himself the restorer of the brothels. The memory of his past life merely gave rise to certain reflections which were none too complimentary to the author. He dwelt, it was said, in a wine-shop of the rue de la Huchette, which is described as a "known brothel" (*bordeau signalé*) in the *Mémoires de la Ligue* (ancient edition, Volume VI, page 347), and he remained there for more than three months with a famous magician who was called the "judge of Coudon." This was in the course of the year 1595; and from this time on, the reformers suspected Cayet of planning, from ambitious motives, to be converted to Catholicism. Cayet, having completed his book on the bad houses and on the necessity of establishing them under well policed conditions, caused it to be copied by his scribe and added to it in his own hand a number of Greek and Latin notes; this manuscript, thus prepared for publication, was confided to a Protestant printer, Robert Estienne, who would appear to have hesitated about putting it upon the press, and who consulted a mutual friend. It has been supposed that this friend must have been Pierre de l'Estoile, with whom Cayet had formed more intimate relations than with anyone else. The result was that the manuscript was stolen from the hands of the printer, and Cayet was accused of libertinism before a consistory of reformed ministers, who heard witnesses, interrogated the accused and condemned him as the author of an execrable book, although Cayet energetically maintained that this book, which he had the right to possess in his study, was "full of" good remedies against incontinence. He indulged in lively reproaches directed against Robert Estienne for having betrayed him. "Monsieur, I have not betrayed you," replied the printer, "I was surprised by another whom I esteemed as I do my own person. I never said that you were the author, and I confess to you that I promised never to reveal it to anyone." (*Chronologie Novennaire*, by Palma Cayet, under the year 1595.)

Cayet, who was solemnly deposed by the consistory, declared upon the spot that he thereby joined the Catholic and Roman church, and

left the service of the King's sister. The treatise "on the establishment of the brothels" was not printed, and the evangelic ministers who possessed the original manuscript held it as a permanent threat over the head of the author, who thereupon became a doctor in the faculty of theology and abandoned his studies in the occult sciences. There was a popular rumor to the effect that he had sold himself to the Devil, and that he had signed with his own blood a contract with the Prince of Darkness. The Protestants, it is true, pursued him with threats, satires and calumnies, in which the detestable volume always bobbed up, a volume which no one had seen except the printer, Robert Estienne, Pierre de l'Estoile and the members of the Consistory. Following is the manner in which De l'Estoile, who was suspected of being the author of this book, speaks of it in his *Journal*. "In this very time, and at the end of the year (1595), a minister of Madame named Pierre Victor Cayet abjured the religion and left the ministry in order to become a Roman Catholic priest; he used up many reams of paper against the ministers, his former associates, who accused him of having begun his conversion in the brothel; for they produced a book which he had written in favor of tolerating such places, on which subject the following quatrain was composed:

*Cayet, se voulant faire prebstre,
A monsté qu'il a bon cerveau;
Car il veult, avent que de l'estre,
Faire restablir le bordeau."**

This passage gives us to understand that Pierre de l'Estoile was familiar with this book, and that copies of it had been struck off, but Cayet never confessed that the work was his, which permits us to assume that he was ashamed of having written it. Agrippa d'Aubigné, who could not forgive Cayet for his apostacy, thus sets forth the motives in the case in his *Histoire Universelle* (Volume III, Book IV, Chapter 41): "It happened also that Cayet, working at magic, some time afterwards was deposed, being also accused of having composed two books, the one, to prove that by the sixth commandment neither fornications nor adultery were forbidden, but only the sin of Onan (*sola masturbatio inhibita*), while the other was to prove the necessity

**Translator's Note:*—Cayet, desiring to be a priest,
Doth a very good head show;
Since before he turns, at least,
He'd reestablish the bordeau.

of reëstablishing the brothels everywhere. D'Aubigné was tireless in vilifying Cayet on the subject of these two works, which in reality constituted but a single work, according to the notes of the author of the *Confession de Sancy*, (page 58 of the edition published by Leduchat in 1744, following the *Journal de Henri III*). But in the *Confession de Sancy*, D'Aubigné recurs to the two books with a persistence which bears witness to a deep-rooted conviction: "We should not hold among the sins," he causes his hero, the Sire of Sancy to say, "simple fornication nor adultery for love, according to the argument of Cayet in his learned volume on the reëstablishment of the brothels and his learned dispute on the seventh commandment. . . . This seventh commandment, which reads *Non moechaberis*, merely forbids the sin of the children of Onan, for *moicheuein* derives, according to this modern theologian, *apo tou moichou* and *cheuein*, *quod est humidum fundere*." In the *Baron de Foeneste*, D'Aubigné always refers to two books, although this facetious satire had been composed after the death of Palma Cayet, "Do you accuse him of magic?" demands the Baron.—"He was in the beginning," replies Enay, who is none other than D'Aubigné himself, "accused of but two books, in one of which he sustained that neither fornication nor adultery was a sin forbidden by the seventh commandment, but that this commandment merely forbade to *moichon cheuein*, having to do with the sin of Onan, and thereupon he had the sacred Society (the Society of Jesus) for an enemy; the other book was on the reëstablishment of the brothels." This chapter (Book II, Chapter 22) ends with an abominable sonnet, which is also to be found at the end of the *Confession de Sancy*, under this title: *Syllogisme Expositoire sur la Controverse si l'Eglise est des Éleus Seulement*.* This sonnet, the final stroke of which is imitated from a passage of the *Passavant* of Théodore de Bèze, applies to the Roman Church the words of the prophet Ezekiel, on the subject of the woman *quae divaricavit tibias suas sub omni arbore*; this sonnet, inspired by Palma Cayet's abjuration, recalls the fact that this apostate "desired to lodge the whores in freedom" (*voulut loger les putains en franchise*), while he was still a Huguenot:

*Catholique, il poursuit encor son entreprise.***

*Translator's Note:—"Expository Syllogism on the Question as to Whether the Church is Made Up Exclusively of the Elect."

**Translator's Note:—A Catholic, he still pursues his enterprise.

Agrippa d'Aubigné, who was a personal enemy of the poor Cayet, and who never ceased to belch forth against the latter the most atrocious insults, felt that he might describe him thus:

*L'avocat des putains, syndic des maquereaux.**

Finally in another passage of the *Confession de Sancy*, D'Aubigné once more puts upon the carpet one of Cayet's two books, in speaking of the great Pope Sixtus V, "who opened the brothels of women and of lads, from having read the book of M. Cayet." We may infer from this phrase, with some probability, that Cayet, in the discourse which he proposed to present to Parliament, and which he had trigged out with Greek and Latin quotations, had concerned himself with debauchery among all peoples and at all periods, and that he had not forgotten to cite in support of his opinion, the precedent of Pope Sixtus IV, (and not Sixtus V), to whom was attributed the establishment of the places of Prostitution devoted to one and the other Venus. *Lupanaria utrique Veneri erexit*, the learned Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim had said, in one of the first editions of his celebrated treatise, *De Vanitate et Incertitudine Scientiarum* (Chapter 64, *De Lenocinio*); but he afterwards modified this rather hazardous assertion and contented himself with recalling the fact that this debauched Pope had constructed at Rome a noble brothel. *Romae nobile adomodum lupanar extruxit*. (See, in the *Dict. Hist. et Crit.* of Bayle, the article on Sixtus IV.)

Palma Cayet's projects were never submitted to Parliament or to the decision of competent judges. There was no reform, no innovation in the policing of manners, although some bad houses remained open with the tacit agreement of civil and criminal lieutenants. It is permissible, however, to suspect that grave abuses had taken place in connection with this arbitrary tolerance of certain asylums of Prostitution; we are led to believe that the commissioners or their agents sometimes received pecuniary revenues or presents from the despicable agents of debauchery; for an ordinance of Henri III dated the 15th of October, 1588, lets it be understood that, in many cases, the magistrates had neglected to apply the edict of 1560 concerning the brothels, but had appeared to favor the interests of the depraved gentry who lived at the expense of Prostitution. In this ordinance

**Translator's Note*.—The advocate of whores, syndic of pimps.

“against blasphemers, gaming-house keepers, tavern-keepers, wine-shop proprietors, jugglers and persons making practice of dissolute games” the two following paragraphs are to be remarked: “It is forbidden to all to keep brothels, gaming-houses and games of dice. the which are to be punished extraordinarily, without dissimulation or connivance on the part of judges, on pain of being deprived of their offices.—It is forbidden to all proprietors to rent houses except to persons of good repute, and they are not to suffer in them any evil traffic or secret or public brothel, under pain of a fine of 60 Parisian pounds for the first offense, and of 120 Parisian pounds for the second, and for the third offense, they are to be deprived of their property and houses.” (See the *Edicts et Ordonnances des Rois de France*, collected by Ant. Fontanon and augmented by Gabr. Michel, edition of 1610, Volume IV, page 243.) There must, therefore, have been a certain “connivance” between the judges and the interested parties, to lead the King thus to enjoin the former to refrain from all “dissimulation” in the hunting down and prosecution of secret houses of ill-fame. This royal ordinance was not observed any more scrupulously than the others, and Prostitution, that necessary outlet for the shameful passions, which are always fermenting in a great city, continued to find a *gîte* among the sweating-room-keepers, the barbers, the hostlers, the wine-shop proprietors and the inn-keepers, although the houses of such gentry, ill-famed enough, were constantly exposed to those domiciliary visits, by day and night, which the commissioners of the Châtelet were called upon to make, but which were not frequently made by them. “There were always,” says Delamare (*Traité de la Police*, Volume I page 525), “many individuals corrupt enough or interested enough to rent their houses, wholly or in part, for this infamous business. The police magistrates endeavored to cope with this by republishing, from time to time, the statutory regulations, and by endeavoring to enforce these by means of new ordinances.”

Delamare cites one of these ordinances, dated the 19th of July, 1619, and rendered by Messire Henry de Mesmes, Seigneur d’Irval, king’s counsellor, civil lieutenant of the city, provost and Viscount of Paris. The king’s procurator having complained that “a number of persons of evil life were lodging and retiring in that city and conducting brothels, causing a number of thefts, murders and assassinations,” the civil lieutenant expressly forbade “all persons, of whatever quality or condition they might be, to lodge in their houses any persons of

evil life, under pain of loss of rents, even their houses to be placed at the disposition of the king's procurator for a period of three years, the revenues therefrom to be given over and rendered to the poor." At the same time, the civil lieutenant ordered "all vagabond and debauched women to leave the city and suburbs of Paris, within twenty-four hours after the publication of the present ordinance, under pain of imprisonment." The bourgeois and other inhabitants of Paris were required to lend all the aid in their power to the first officer of the Châtelet and to the other officers of justice charged with the execution of this ordinance; they were also required to seize all violators and conduct them to the commissioner of their quarter, under pain of a fine of 100 Parisian pounds. This ordinance would appear to have been frequently reenacted with practically the same wording; as that of the 30th of March, 1635, rendered by Michel Moreau, civil lieutenant of the provost's office, contained prescriptions still more rigorous, to judge by these three articles which Delamare extracts from it: "I. We have enjoined, according to the ordinances and decrees of the Court herein set forth, all vagabonds of no occupation and without a trade, including all barbers' apprentices, tailors and those of all other callings, as well as girls and debauched women, to take service and find a situation within twenty-four hours; otherwise to leave this city and suburbs under pain, against the men, of being put into chains and sent to the galleys, and against the women and girls, of the lash, of being shorn and being perpetually banished without process of law.—II. All proprietors and principal tenants of the houses of this city and suburbs are forbidden to rent or sublease their houses except to persons of good life and good repute, and are forbidden to suffer in the said houses any evil traffic, sport or game, under pain of a fine of 60 pounds for the first offense, the loss of rents for a period of three years for the second offense, and the confiscation of their property for the third offense, to the profit of the Hôtel-Dieu of this city.—III. Similar prohibitions are addressed to tavern keepers, wine-shop proprietors, renters of furnished rooms and others, against lodging or receiving, by day or by night, any persons of the said conditions, or administering to them any nourishment, under pain of exemplary punishment."

A number of tragic events, related in the *Journals* of Pierre de l'Etoile, show us what a menace to the safety of citizens were these debauchees, "ruffians" and unemployed who were thus required to

leave Paris. They were ready to commit any crime, provided it was paid for. Like the "brave" (*bravi*) Italians, they constantly had a dagger in their hands, and when they did not bear arms, they made use of a *jeton*,* "which cut like a razor," in order to slash off the noses of their enemies or mutilate their faces, handling this instrument with great dexterity. (See the *Journal de Henri III*, edition of the MM. Champollion, page 131.) In 1581, Jean Levoix, counsellor to the Parliament of Paris, desired to avenge himself on his mistress, who was the wife of a procurator of the Châtelet, named Boulanger. This adulteress, whom he kept publicly, had resolved of a sudden to amend her ways and to alter her mode of life; she therefore besought her corrupter not to importune her any more, and resisted the efforts which he made to lead her back into vice. "Being constrained to go his way, he heaped a thousand insults upon her; and upon leaving, he called her 'whore' and 'wily one' (*rusée*), and threatened to brand her as a woman of her trade." A short while afterward, on the eve of Pentecost, the poor woman being in the fields with her husband, Jean Levoix, accompanied by some "ruffians of the brothel" (*ruffisques de tanchau*), surprised her there in a secluded place, and, having hurled her from her horse, ordered the wretches whom he had brought with him to slash off her nose with a *jeton*. The victim of this frightful treatment brought suit against the counsellor, Jean Levoix, who was obliged to make a settlement with the complaining party and pay her 2,000 crowns. The ruffians who had mutilated Boulanger's wife were less fortunate, however, than Levoix himself. It was ruffians of this sort who slew, in 1576, in the rue des Lavandières, the Captain Richelieu, known as Le Moine, "a man of ill fame and renowned for his larcenies, thefts and blasphemies, being for the rest a great ruffian and a runner for all the brothels." This Captain, irritated at the hubbub kept up in a house adjoining his own, addressed the roysterers from his window about ten o'clock at night and threatened to expel them from their *canard*, "it being displeasing to him that they should undertake their ruffianly and whorish enterprises so near his own lodgings, in his sight and under his very beard." He was dared to come down into the street, and when he did so, before he had had time to draw his sword, he fell, pierced by a hundred dagger-thrusts. (*Journ. de Henri III*, page 65.) In 1607, another gentleman, whom De

*Translator's Note:—*Jeton* is a counter or brass farthing. Cf. our "brass knucks" (knuckles). The *jeton*, however, had a sharp edge.

l'Estoile does not name, was slain in a Paris brothel by the son of the Baron Rochefort, in a quarrel.

This latter fact, reported by Pierre de l'Estoile, king's counsellor and grand crier to the Chancellery of France, proves that, notwithstanding the royal ordinances of the King and the police regulations, the brothels of Paris, tolerated if not authorized, enjoyed a scandalous notoriety, which sometimes led to their being closed and to the expulsion of the lost women and debased men who were found in them. Pierre de l'Estoile describes still more vividly the strange disorders which were prevalent at this period with regard to the policing of morals: "On Wednesday, the 13th of April, 1611, was held the harangue (*mercuriale*), in which M. the first President delivered a triumphant discourse on the necessity of reformation in all ranks of society, and principally with regard to the grave abuses and corruptions of justice existing in connection with the police of Paris, for which he asserted it was necessary to find a remedy, as he proposed to do (but I fear this proposal remained a mere intention)." He goes on to speak strongly against the "gaming-houses" (*brelans* and brothels, publicly tolerated and which should be closed. "As for the gaming houses, it is an easy enough thing to verify, since there are said to be a thousand of them at Paris; among these forty-seven are authorized, notorious and so public that the civil lieutenant receives a *pistole* from each of them every day, which is a great gain, dishonest enough in truth, but very easy and assured, and beyond hazard." If the gaming-houses were authorized in return for a daily revenue, payable to the civil lieutenant of the provost's office, it is clear that the brothels must also have paid for a similar toleration. But De l'Estoile does not say so, and we are reduced to supposing that the civil lieutenant drew one *pistole* each day from the great brothels as from the gambling-houses, inasmuch as these latter did not differ from the houses of ill-fame.

"With regard to the brothels of Paris," adds De l'Estoile, "I think we might justly apply to this city the saying of Stratonice, who, coming out of Heraclea, looked around in all directions to see if anyone saw him, and when one of his friends inquired the reason, replied: 'Because I should be ashamed to be seen coming out of a brothel,' indicating by this reply the corruption and lechery which was universal throughout the city. And as a matter of fact, even the street-porters, the street-corner cobblers and the slanderers of the Court and the Palace (most of whom were what they were by profes-

sion) cried out and said that M. the first President ought to begin by reforming his own house." (*Mémoire et Journal* of P. de l'Etoile, on the reign of Henri IV, edition of MM. Champollion, page 661.)

CHAPTER LXXX

WE have sought the characteristics of fifteenth-century Prostitution among the poets of that era; we have looked, especially, in the poems of François Villon, who did not fear to tarnish his muse by promenading her from tavern to tavern and by providing her with a following of *enfants perdus*, *mauvais garçons* and prostitutes. It is now our task to make a similar investigation among the poems dating from the beginning of the seventeenth century, and especially among those of Mathurin Regnier, who, like Villon, has unblushingly depicted the Prostitution of his times. Villon was a vagabond scholar who lived in the wine-shops and the most shameful of the *clapiers*; Regnier was almost a courtier, almost a gentleman, almost an ecclesiastic, who, led on by his own fitful passions, sometimes forgot his name, his birth and his rank, to frequent incognito the most despicable asylums of public debauchery. In Villon we find the habit of moral degradation. In Regnier, on the contrary, we find, so to speak, a whimsical predilection for misconduct; we have here the adventurous pursuit of erotic pleasure in all its phases. Regnier, therefore, shall be our guide, upon leaving Henri IV's court, where his genius as a poet had won him an honorable position; he shall lead us to the hideous *gîtes* where vagrant Prostitution then found refuge, made what it was by prohibitive laws and the inconsistent police measures inspired by municipal tolerance.

Mathurin Regnier, son of a sheriff of the city of Chartres, a nephew, on his mother's side, of the poet Desportes, having assumed the tonsure at the age of eleven years and being destined for the priesthood, was early attached as a secretary, to the person of a cardinal, François de Joyeuse, who took him to Rome and kept him there for ten years; he was unable to resist his profligate inclinations, which caused him to fall into the most scandalous misdemeanors. It would be hard to say whether it was poetry which had predisposed him to debauchery, or debauchery which had awakened in him the poetic inspiration. Regnier, whose amours had "rendered him gray before his time," was led to recognize the fact, at the age of thirty, that his poetic temperament was of an Epicurean character; it is this temperament, it is this fire, he tells us,

. . . *qui rend le poète ardent et chaud,
 Subject à ses plaisirs, de courage si haut,
 Qu'il méprise le peuple et les choses communes,
 Et, bravant les faveurs, se mocque des fortunes;
 Qui le fait desbauché, frenetique, resvant,
 Porter la teste basse et l'esprit dans le vent,
 Esgayer sa fureur parmy des precipices,
 Et plus qu'à la raison subject à ses caprices.**

He excused himself thus for "never fitting his youth to another fashion" (*ranger sa jeunesse à d'autres façons*), and on never changing his conduct, in spite of the reproaches which were addressed to him on a certain score, which he makes no pretense of hiding:

*C'est que mon humeur libre à l'amour est sujet!**
 (*Satire V.*)

There were other complaints which might have been lodged against the young Mathurin, who was otherwise adorned with all the best qualities of heart and mind, perfected by study, philosophy, and a knowledge of the world. His deplorable habits interfered with his advancement, in spite of the friendship with the great which he had formed by reason of his native charm and gentleness. The Cardinal de Joyeuse did not even dare obtain for him a canonry or an abbey; and when he left the service of this prelate to become secretary of the legation in the suite of Philippe de Bêthune, French ambassador at the court of Rome, he was as poor and as amorous as he had been upon his arrival from Chartres, sponsored by his uncle, the Abbé Desportes. All the money which he had earned had been squandered in the sewers of Prostitution. Regnier has given us a self-portrait, done with a naïveté and a frankness which have made of him a type of "brothel-runner" (see *Satire VIII*, addressed to the Marquis de Coeuvres).

**Translator's Note:—*

Which renders the poet so ardent and so warm
 In quest of pleasure, of courage like the storm,
 Till he, despising common folk and things,
 Braving her favors, mocks at Fortune's flings;
 Debauched and mad, head hanging very low,
 His mind is in the wind, and with the wind must go
 To seek the precipice in every season,
 Since he is subject to caprice, not reason.

***Translator's Note:—*It is that my free humor to love is subject.

He declares that the love of women is a very violent thing with him, and that strength and reason are absolutely lacking to enable him to resist this exclusive and dominant passion: "I do not have *the judgment*," he says,

*De conduire ma barque en ce ravissement;
Au gouffre du plaisir la courante m'emporte;
Tout ainsi qu'un cheval qui à la bouche forte,
J'obéis au caprice. . . .**

He abandons himself, it is true, with some delicacy to this *fougue* of the senses; his fault was a voluntary one; he is content with his lot; he finds himself all too happy, he tells us,

*D'estre, comme je suis, en tous lieux amoureux,
Et, comme è bien aymer mille causes m'invitent,
Aussi mille beautéz mes amours ne limitent;
Et courant çà et là, je trouve tous les jours,
En des subjects nouveaux, de nouvelles amours.***

Regnier loves without choice; all women are good to him: the old as well as the young, the ugly as well as the beautiful. He proceeds to uphold this singular thesis, that the most ill-favored creature, the most repulsive, may still play her woman's rôle in the eternal comedy of love. There we have the refined essence of a monstrous and depraved sensuality! None other than Regnier, perhaps, would have emitted such a paradox, among all the erotic poets, ancient and modern:

*Tant l'aveugle appetit ensorcelle les hommes,
Qu'encores qu'une femme aux amours fasse peur,
Que le ciel et Venus la voient à contre-cœur,
Toutefois, estant femme, elle aura ses delices,*

**Translator's Note:—To guide my bark in seas of ravishment;
To pleasure's gulf the current sweeps along,
Just like a horse whose mouth is very strong,
And I obey caprice. . . .*

***Translator's Note:—*

*At being, as I am, on every amorous scene,
Where, while a myriad things to love invite,
A thousand beauties are insufficient quite;
But, running here and there, I every day
Find novel subjects for my amorous play.*

*Relevera sa grace avecq des artifices,
Qui dans l'estat d'amour la sauront maintenir,
Et par quelques attraites les amants retenir.**

He goes on to develop, as a convinced expert, his system of compensation in love, and he brings to life the secret merits which are to be encountered in a woman to make up for her exterior defects and her apparent inferiority; he is in agreement with Ovid, when he goes so far as to take sides in favor of the silly and the ignorant:

*Je croy qu'au fait d'amour elle sera scavante,
Et que Nature, habile à couvrir son deffault,
Luy aura mis au liet tout l'esprit qu'il luy faut.***

He thinks that a provident Nature has thus so well arranged things,

*De peur que nulle femme, ou fust laide ou fust belle,
Ne vescu sans le faire et ne mourust pucelle.****

After having in this manner justified all the imperfections which may be the lot of the feminine sex, he comes back to his own blind and irresistible need of endeavoring everywhere to assuage his incontinence. He gives expression to the violence and ardor of his temperament with a libidinous verve which we are only to encounter in Restif de la Bretonne a century and a half later: this is not love, it is sensuality, without delicacy, without curb and without law:

**Translator's Note:—*

Blind appetite does so bewitch us men
That, though a woman is of such a mien
As to fright Heaven and Venus when she's seen,
Still, being woman, she shall find delight
Covering with artifice each natural blight,
And in the state of love she still shall dwell,
Holding her lovers by a lonesome spell.

***Translator's Note:—*

In love, 'tis my opinion, she is wise,
And Nature cleverly shall conceal her lack,
When she in bed lies flat upon her back.

****Translator's Note:—*

From fear some woman, hag or beauty, die
A virgin and, a virgin, go on high.

*Or moy qui suis tout flamme, et de nuict et de jour,
 Qui n'haleine que feu, ne respire qu'amour,
 Je me laisse emporter à mes ardeurs communes,
 Et cours sous divers vents de diverses fortunes.
 Ravy de mes objets, j'ayme si vivement,
 Que je n'ay pour l'amour ny choix ny jugement.
 De toute eslection mon ame est despourveue,
 Et nul object certain ne limite ma veue.
 Tout femme m'agrée. . . .**

It would be impossible to exhibit a greater degree of complacency toward vice. We can understand that, with this continual impatience for illicit pleasures, Regnier must have had more than one encounter which was unfortunate at once for his health and for his purse: hence, all the scourges of Venus which bore him down with premature infirmities. His Maecenas, Philippe de Bèthune, came to his aid by providing him with a canonry in the church of Notre Dame de Chartres and a pension of 2,000 pounds from the Abbey of Vaux-Cernay, of which his uncle, Desportes, had been the titular abbot. Regnier, aged barely thirty-one, was already infirm, suffering from gout and rheumatism, and laden with disgusting memories of his debauches; he fell back incessantly into the hands of the physicians, who despaired of curing him. In a number of his poems, he pictures the sad state to which he has been reduced by what he calls the "good natural law" (*bone loi naturelle*), to which he had yielded with so good a grace:

*La douleur aux traits vénéneux,
 Comme d'un habit épineux,
 Me ceint d'une horrible torture;
 Mes beaux jours sont changés en nuits,
 Et mon coeur, tout fletry d'ennuis,
 N'attend plus que la sepulture.*

*Translator's Note:—

Now I, who am all flame and all desire,
 Who breathe, by night or day, none but love's fire,
 I drift away with all the winds that blow
 And all of fortune's varying breezes know,
 Ravished with love, I can no longer choose,
 But I, in love, all judgment straightway lose:
 Election leaves my soul, and I am left
 With a lover's vision that is never cleft:
 All women are good to me. . . .

*Enivré de cent maux divers,
 Je chancelle et vay de travers,
 Tant mon ame en regorge pleine:
 J'en ay l'esprit tout hebsté,
 Et si peu qui m'en est resté,
 Encor me fait-il de la peine.**

But the inextinguishable sufferings which he experienced in all his body, the disagreeable treatment which he was forced to undergo, the painful operations to which he was condemned, were not the greatest chastisement he had to endure: his greatest punishment was the shame at feeling himself incapable of reëntering upon the career of vice which he had formerly pursued. In one of his elegies, he relates, in fine verses, worthy of the Greek and Latin erotics, the affront which one of his mistresses had one day to suffer as payment for the favor she had wished to show him; he blushes at finding his abilities so unequal to his desires:

*Mais quoy! que deviendray-je en l'extresme vieillesse,
 Puisque je suis rêtif au fort de ma jeunesse,
 Et si las! je ne puis, et jeune et vigoureux,
 Savourer la douceur du plaisir amoureux?
 Ah! j'en rougis de honte et despite mon age,
 Age de peu de force et de peu de couragel . . .
 Pour flatter mon défaut, mais que me sert la gloire,
 De mon amour passé inutile mémoire,
 Quand, aymant ardemment et ardemment aimé,
 Tant plus je combattois, plus j'estois animé;*

**Translator's Note:—*

Grief, her pock-marked face forlorn,
 As with a fiery cloak of thorn,
 With torture girdles me;
 My splendid days to nights now change,
 My heart with an old ennui is strange,
 And naught but the grave can see.
 Worn am I with a hundred woes,
 As one who this way, that way goes;
 My soul to belch is fain:
 What mind I have is over-dull,
 And from it I can only cull
 The bitter fruit of pain.

*Guerrier infatigable en ce doux exercice,
Par dix ou douze fois je rentrois dans la lice.**

This insufficiency was, undoubtedly, but transient and due to circumstances, but Regnier who flattered himself upon being able to love "even after his death," found difficulty in recovering from the humiliation, which he could only assign to his own abuse of pleasures and the ravages of shameful maladies. He began again, none the less, his search of fortune in the ill-famed streets, in an effort to retrieve his vital energy with prostitutes. Let us follow him, at some distance, in these excursions.

One evening, after a ridiculous dinner at which he, against his own will, had been present as a guest, a dinner which had ended in a free-for-all fight, he left the house without asking for a light, bound for his own lodgings, but he was far from home, and did not know the way any too well; moreover, the night was one of the blackest, and the rain was falling in torrents. He was walking alongside the houses finding shelter in the lean-to's of shops and wrapped in his mantle, when he was brought up suddenly "in a villainous passage-way." He did his best to cling to the wall, but it was not a wall which met his hand; it was a door, which was not closed, and which suddenly opened fully. He fell inside it, with some fracas, flat upon his belly, and found himself in the entry-way of a dark and stinking alley:

*On demande que c'est: je me relève, j'entre,
Et, voyant que le chien n'aboyoit point la nuit,
Que les verrous graissés ne faisoient aucun bruit,
Qu'on me rioit au nez et qu'une chambrière
Vouloit cacher ensemble et montrer la lumière,
Je suis, je le voy bien. . . . Je parle; l'on répond.
Ou, sans fleurs de bien dire ou d'autre art plus profond,*

*Translator's Note:—

Alas! What shall I be in my last hour,
Who am so barren in my youth's fine flower,
So barren and fatigued I cannot taste
The joy of pleasure as my forces waste?
Ah! I must blush from shame and from deep pain,
So little strength, so little courage there! . . .
I can but think, to flatter my sad plight,
Of days gone by, but that is useless quite,
Days when the more I loved, the more I grew
In power to love, no amorous limit knew;
A tireless warrior whose aim ne'er missed,
A dozen times I'd enter, then, the list.

*Nous tombâmes d'accord. Le monde je contemple,
Et me trouve en un lieu de fort mauvais exemple.**

Once having entered "this respectable dwelling" (*ce logis d'honneur*), to pay his respects to his hostess, he undoes his purse, and tosses it upon the table. Upon catching the gleam of a crown, the servant-maid and the mistress of the girls are ready to serve him, murmuring "The honest fellow that he is!" and hasten to please him to the best of their ability. But here are three old hatchet-faces who approach with measured step, and who crouch down on their haunches before the hearth where a little fire of hemp-stalks is burning. One would say that they were three phantoms escaped from Hell: one has the threatening air and bold mien of a theatric Fury; the second is more decrepit and more wrinkled than a sorceress of the sabbaths; the third is so skinny, so yellow, so transparent that one could count her bones. These frightful old hags, covered with plasters and with scars, sit there groaning over their infirmities achieved "on the field of honor and of virtue." One has a disease of the loins, another of the teeth, and the third complains of her cautery:

*En tout elles n'avoient seulement que deux yeux,
Encore bien fletris, rouges et chassieux;
Que la moitié du nez, que quatre dents en bouche,
Qui durant qu'il fait vent branlent sans qu'on les touche.
Pour le reste, il estoit comme il plaisoit à Dieu.
En elles, la santé n'avoit ni feu ni lieu,
Et chascune, à part soy, representoit l'idole
Des fièvres, de la peste et de l'orde verole.***

*Translator's Note:—

What is it, I inquire, arise and enter,
And, seeing that no dog gives the alarm,
But heavy bolts are noiseless as a charm,
With a chamber-wench beneath my very nose,
Hiding a light with which the way she shows,
I know well where I am. . . . I speak, and hear
Reply that lets me know I need not fear:
We understand each other very well;
I am acquainted with this little Nell.

**Translator's Note:—

Between them but two eyes they had, I swear,
Two red, blear eyes, these hags beyond compare,
But half a nose, four teeth between them all,
Which with the slightest breeze seemed like to fall.
As for the rest, thanks to God's pleasant grace,
Nor health nor fire in them had any place,
But each for her part was the image true
Of fevers, pestilence and the syphilis, too.

Such were the abominable Megaeras who traded in legal Prostitution at that time, and who were tireless in laboring for their own profit. Regnier, "at this hideous spectacle," was filled with horror for his own vice, and was preparing to beat a retreat, when suddenly:

. . . *D'un cabinet sortit un petit coeur,
Avec son chapperon, sa mine de poupée,
Disant: "J'ay si grand' peur de ces hommes d'espée,
Que si je n'eusse veu qu'estiez un financier,
Je me fusse plustost laissé crucifier
Que de mettre le nez où je n'ay rien à faire,
Jean, mon mary, monsieur, il est apoticaire?
Surtout, vive l'amour et bran pour les sergents!
Ardez! voire, c'est mon! je me cognois en gens:
Vous estes, je voy bien, grand abbateur de quilles,
Mais, au reste, honneste homme, et payez bien les filles!"**

Thus, among the women of evil life, there were married women, or at least those who boasted of being married in order to inspire more confidence in a customer. "But, Monsieur," the *petit coeur* says to him, with any number of curtsies, "have you not supped?

*Je vous pri', notez l'heure? Eh bien! que vous en semble?
Estes-vous pas d'avis que nous couchions ensemble?"***

Regnier was bedraggled to the eyes and wet through to the bone; he had need of nothing but a bed, and all he asked was to sleep. The *dame du logis* then offers to conduct him into a chamber where he shall be well provided for; she shows him the way and goes on ahead of him, speaking all the while of two girls, Jeanne and Macette, who are the fortune of her house:

*Translator's Note:—

. . . . When from a closet came a little sweet,
A doll's own counterpart in hat and charms,
Saying: "I greatly fear these men of arms;
If I'd not seen you were a financier,
Then crucify me if I'd be your dear,
For where I put my nose I'm very wary.
My husband, Jean, is an apothecary?
What of it? Long live love, is what I say.
A fig for the police. I know my way:
I can see that you at nine-pins have some skill,
An honest man, who pays the girls their fill."

**Translator's Note:—

Note well the hour, and also note the weather.
Do you not think that we should sleep together?

*Par le vray Dieu! qui Jeanne estoit et claire et nette,
Claire comme un bassin, nette comme un denier;
Au reste, fors Monsieur, que j'estois le premier.**

It was Jeanne whom Regnier had just glimpsed; but all the good that might be said of her could not persuade him to see her closer up. A tortuous staircase led to the place where Regnier was to find a lodging for the night:

*La montée estoit torte et de fascheux accèz:
Tout branloit dessous nous jusqu' au dernier estage.
D'eschelle en eschellon, comme un linot en cage,
Il falloit sauteler et des pieds s'accrocher,
Ainsi comme une chèvre en grim pant un rocher.
Après cent soubresautz, nous vinsmes en la chambre,
Qui' n'avoit pas le goust de musc, civette ou d'ambre:
La porte en estoit basse et sembloit un guichet,
Qui n'avoit pour serrure autre engin qu'un crochet.***

At the moment when, bent double, Regnier was about to enter this hole, he struck his head and made a false step which sent him tumbling backwards to the bottom of the stairs, "with head and rump counting each step." He had taken with him in his fall the poor lady, who was more hurt than he, and who lay there stretched out, her nose upon the flag-stones, "without pulse and without breath." The others came running at the noise; a light was brought, and the lady was revived sufficiently to enable her to cry out and storm against Jeanne and Macette, whom she accused of having "brought her bad luck" (*porter guignon*.) Regnier, for the first time in his life, perhaps, did

**Translator's Note:—*

By the true God! but Jeanne was fresh and clean
As any coin or basin ever seen,
And save for monsieur, I was the very first.

***Translator's Note:—*

The stair was crooked, very hard to climb,
And shook beneath us in a fearful rage.
From rung to rung, like linnet in a cage,
We had to leap and cling and stem the shock,
Just like a nanny-goat upon a rock.
A hundred somersaults, we reached the room,
No civet, musk or amber in its gloom;
The door was low—a wicket were more like—
And with no lock except a rusty spike.

not think of love, but aspired merely to be alone, in order to be free from temptation. He provided himself with a candle, climbed the stairs again and took possession of the infected hovel which had been assigned to him as a sleeping-chamber; he did not see any bed, but made the following inventory of all the weird objects which met his gaze:

*Or, en premier item, sous mes pieds, je rencontre
Un chaudron, esbreché, la bourse d'une montre,
Quatre boîtes d'unguents, une d'alun brulé,
Deux gands despariez (dépareillés), un manchon tout pelé,
Trois fioles d'eau bleue, autrement d'eau seconde,
La petite seringue, une esponge, une sonde,
Du blanc, un peu de rouge, un chiffon de rabat,
Un balay pour brusler en allant au sabbat,
Une vieille lanterne, un tabouret de paille,
Qui s'estoit sur trois pieds sauvé de la bataille;
Un baril defoncé, deux bouteilles sur cu,
Qui disoient, sans goulot: "Nous avons trop vescu!"
Un petit sac tout plein de poudre de mercure,
Un vieux chapperon gras de mauvaise teinture. . . .**

While Regnier was surveying these miserable and sordid relics of Prostitution, Jeanne arrived, bearing under her arm the material to furnish the bed, which consisted of a door placed upon two wobbly trestles and laden with a straw pallet; Jeanne, who had just been scolded and beaten by her *dame*, takes revenge by indulging in countless insults directed at "that old villainess" (*cette vilaine*), complaining all the while of her condition:

**Translator's Note:—*

Item the first, beneath my very feet,
A broken kettle and a watch-bag meet,
Four ointment-boxes, one of burnt-alum stuff,
Three phials of holy water, another kind,
A little syringe, a sponge, a probe I find,
A little rouge and powder and chiffon,
A broom for the witches' Sabbath, to ride upon,
An ancient lantern, taboret of straw,
Upon three legs, saved from the battle's maw;
A caved-in cask, two bottles upon end,
Which, throatless, speak: "We've lived too long, my friend!"
One little sack, quite full of mercury,
A faded hat—such are the things I see.

*"Qui vit céans, ma foy! n'a pas besogne faite!
Tousjours à nouveau mal nous vient nouveau soucy;
Je ne scay, quant à moy, quel logis c'est icy:
Il n'est, par le vray Dieu! jour ouvrier ny feste,
Que ces carongnes-la ne me rompent la teste.
Bien, bien, je m'en iray, sitost qu'il fera jour!
On trouve dans Paris d'autres maisons d'amour! . . .
Tousjours après souper ceste vilaine crie!
Monsieur, n'est-il pas temps? couchons-nous, je vous prie!"**

While speaking thus, she made the bed, "as black as a scullion," and drew over it the covers, which were too short and spotted with guilty stains:

*Dieu scait quels lacs d'amour, quels chiffres, quelles fluers,
De quels compartimens et combien de couleurs,
Relevoient leur maintien et leur blacheur naïfve,
Blanchie en un sivé (ou privé?), non dans une lessive!***

The bed was made; Jeanne besought Regnier to lie down; but although he was ready to drop from lack of sleep, this frightful bed did not tempt him any more than did the object which he was destined to meet with there; but the girl gave him no peace; she unbuckled his shoes and took off his doublet by force. Regnier resisted all the while, "playing the honest man," until he finally decided to go through with it. He took off one shoe and a garter and proceeded slowly to remove his other clothes, and then ventured with horror under those terrible bedclothes. He was not there long when there came a clamor at the

**Translator's Note:—*

Who lives here, on my word, has sorry luck!
Always new trouble brings new weight of care;
If there's a worse house, I do not know where:
By the true God! no feast or working day
But these jades break my head in whorish fray.
I swear, I'll leave when it is light above!
There are in Paris other homes of love! . . .
When supper's done, you always hear her bawl!
"Monsieur, it's bed-time now for one and all!"

***Translator's Note:—*

God knows what lakes of love, what figured flowers,
Colored mementoes of what amorous bowers,
Relieved the gleaming whiteness of their mien—
Not in a wash-tub whitened, but a latrine!

street-door and someone called "Catherine!" Jeanne put out the light, which had probably attracted the attention of some belated passer-by. She did not reply, and no one in the house uttered a word. Then the knocks redoubled; there was a sound of hands and feet; someone was breaking in the door; there were cries, threats and oaths. Jeanne, all this time, was preaching a "sermon" to the poor Regnier, who was very much disturbed at all this; she reproached him with not having gone to bed more quickly, and with having lost precious time, which he could not regain. "What the devil," she said to him with ill-humor, "what the devil do you expect?" The knocking at the door kept up, but the tune was changed, and the threats had become prayers; yet the door was not opened. Then those outside imitated the royal guard; they spoke sometimes as soldiers, sometimes as citizens: "Open in the name of the King!" The real guard came running at the noise, and the comrades in debauchery fled through the neighboring streets. There was a moment's respite, in the course of which Regnier leaped from the bed and began fumbling for his clothing; but the more he hurried, the less progress he made; he was able to find only scattered fragments of his costume: in place of his hat, he found an old shoe; when he looked for his doublet, he found his stocking. Jeanne had not budged from the bed. She encouraged him, however, to put himself in a state to meet the guard without compromising her:

*"Si mon compère Pierre est de garde aujourd'hui,
Non, ne vous fâchez point, vous n'aurez point d'ennui!"**

And then came the guard, knocking authoritatively this time; someone from the house cried "Be patient!" and a window was opened for a parley. Regnier, half clad, departed as inconspicuously as possible from the dive, where his place would at once be taken by another; he descended the ladder, one foot stockinged and the other bare. He hid himself in a corner of the wall at the moment when the door to the alley gave way to a patrol of the guard, who flung into the house "in a humor," he adds, "to do us a bad enough turn." He was not seen and was able to make his escape without saying either good-evening or good-day to anyone, he strode away as fast as he could from this cut-throat den, and he kept on running for a long time without looking behind him, until he took a tumble in a pile of mortar.

**Translator's Note:—If my old crony, Pierre, is of the guard,
Do not be frightened; it will not go hard.*

Day was beginning to break when he reached his own house, "slimy as a pig," swearing that he would never again find himself in such a pass, for, he tells himself as he goes to bed, he

. . . *Qui, troublé d'ardeur, entre au bordel aveugle,
Quand il en sort, il a plus d'yeux et plus aigus
Que Lyncé l'Argonaute ou le jaloux Argus.**

(*Satyre IX.*)

In spite of all his oaths, Regnier was inclined to perjure himself, and to return to the vices which he so loved. For him, all roads led to a den of Prostitution, where he had so many times left behind him his health, his purse and his honor. Another day (see the *Discours d'une vieille maquerelle*), after having quarreled with one of his friends, whom he calls Philon, he conceived the idea of drowning his wrath

*Dans un lieu de mauvais renom,
Où jamais femme n'a dit non.***

He entered in great heat and was afflicted at finding no one but the landlady. The latter, who was a very obliging old dame, remarked to him with a smile, shaking her head:

. . . *Excusez! c'est la feste
Qui fait que l'on ne trouve rien;
Car tout le monde est gens de bien:
Et si j'ay promis en mon ame
Qu'à ce jour, pour n'entrer en blâme,
Ce péché ne seroit commis.
Mais vous estes de nos amis,
Parmanenda! je vous le jure,
Il faut, pour ne vous faire injure,
Après mesme avoir eu le soin
De venir chez nous de si loin,
Que ma chambrière j'envoie*

**Translator's Note:*—He who in heat a brothel blindly enters,
On coming out, has more and sharper eyes, egad,
Than Lynceus, the Argonaut, or jealous Argus had.

***Translator's Note:*—In a bawdy-house—there I'll go,
Where no woman e'er said no.

*Jusques à l'Escu de Savoye.
 La, mon amy, tout d'un plein saut,
 On trouvera ce qu'il vous faut.**

The chambermaid receives the orders of her mistress and runs to the *Écu de Savoie*, which was an ill-famed hostelry where one was always sure of meeting women of easy virtue. This detail shows us that the hostelrys, the taverns and the sweating-rooms were then the privileged assignation places of Prostitution, and that the poor wretches who plied in secret their shameful trade, proscribed by law, were constantly in waiting in such places, being attracted there by the company of depraved men. But nothing took place there of a nature to call for the interference of the police, under whose supervision all the public houses were. In the neighboring streets, however, there were not lacking agents of debauchery, who lent their houses for the purpose of mercenary loves. It was in the houses of these old women, under their eyes and under their direction, that poor girls, and frequently married women, prostituted themselves, at the risk of being arrested and imprisoned as guilty of having sold their bodies. We may believe, nevertheless, that such arrests were rare, and that the sergeants had been ordered to keep their eyes shut. The dwelling of the *pourvoyeuse de bordeau*, as these women were described, was not, properly speaking, a bawdy-house open to every comer, and the agents of the king encountered almost unsurmountable difficulties in endeavoring to apply the law to this species of *maison de passe*, which did not provide a residence for either prostitutes or vagabonds, but which served, so to speak, as a neutral ground for Prostitution. To come back to Regnier, whom we have left entering one of these infamous retreats, since the chambermaid could not be back in less than a

**Translator's Note:—*Sorry! but it's a feast-day, sir,
 Which means there's nothing in our way,
 Since all the world is good today;
 And I have promised, on my soul,
 That on this day, to keep it whole,
 No sin should in this house be done.
 But since of us, my friend, you're one,
 Then, by the Lord! to you I swear,
 Your feelings we must surely spare,
 Since you have come from far to find
 A little pleasure with our kind;
 And so, my wench I will employ
 To go all the way to the Crown of Savoy;
 And there, my friend, we'll find on the fire
 The very thing that you desire.

quarter of an hour, the hostess prayed him to be seated, and proceeded to indulge in a flood of words in order to pass the time for him. After having endeavored to launch a conversation, which the poet absolutely refused to share, impatient as he was at having to wait, and confused at finding himself in such a circumstance, she undertook to relate, point by point, her past history, which was, after all, but a reminiscence of *Courtisane pervertie* of Joachim du Bellay. By means of this tale, which Regnier listened to with only one ear, she sought to keep him patient. She reviewed her numerous amours, from the time her mother had sold, three or four times, that virginity which a lover had been the first to take; she did not conceal the fact that she had learned her indecent trade by trafficking in her own body, as she now trafficked in others, since, being old and withered, she was no longer able to continue her former mode of life. But she prided herself upon being more clever than others of her kind and upon having the best clientele in Paris.

*Je suis vendeuse de chandelles:
Il ne s'en voit point de fidèles
Dans leur estat, comme je suis.
Je cognois bien ce que je puis:
Je ne puis aimer la jeunesse
Qui veut avoir trop de finesse,
Car les plus fines de la cour
Ne me cachent point leur amour.
Telle va souvent à l'église
De qui je cognois la feintise;
Telle qui veut son faict nier
Dit que c'est pour communier;
Mais la chose m'est indiquée:
C'est pour estre communiquée
A ses amys, par mon moyen,
Comme Hélène fit au Troyen.**

**Translator's Note*:—Selling candles, good sir, is my trade:
And you'll find neither woman nor maid
In their calling as faithful as I.
I know well enough not to try
To flatter the fancies of youth,
Which wants too much fineness forsooth.
Yet the finest there are at the court
With me seek the means of good sport.
There is one who goes daily to mass,

The old woman was in the midst of her confidences, when a police-commissioner passed the house, the door of which was half open. The sergeant who accompanied the commissioner pushed the door open and entered. Regnier had barely time to leave by another exit, with which he was familiar, and retire to the house of a neighbor.

*Moitié figue, moitié raisin,
N'ayant ny tristesse ny joye
De n'avoir point trouvé la proye.**

Regnier, who feasted his vagabond appetites in all the bawdy-houses of the city, makes no attempt in his verses to conceal the abject condition of the wretched women with whom he was in the habit of consorting for his pleasure, and whom he despised, undoubtedly, more than anyone. We find, however, the direct expression of this contempt in only one verse:

*Si moins qu'une putain on estimoit ma musel***
(*Satire IV*)

It may be remarked also that, in his poems, where he displays no shame in painting with broad strokes the slackness of public morals, the names of the scandalous companions of his debauched life are not detailed with that brazen ostentation which the poets of his age were in the habit of displaying in their works in speaking of their amours, of whatever sort they may have been. Regnier has sufficient self-respect not to rear a poetic altar to the dishonored beings whom he looks upon as the physical instruments of vice, rather than as the sorry victims of the passions. He names only Madelon and Antoinette, in two epigrams, one of which only is obscene, while the other well

But I know well enough what's her pass;
I know she does dissimilate,
When she goes thus to communicate;
For the thing to me it is very plain:
That when to communion she is fain,
Her case is like fair Helen's of Troy,
And I am but the means to her joy.

**Translator's Note*:—Half a raisin, half a fig,
And neither sad nor glad, may say,
At being cheated of the fray.
“*Moitié figue, moitié raisin*” (our “so-so”) is a proverbial expression still current.

***Translator's Note*:—If less than a whore one should esteem my muse!

describes the light woman of a frank and audacious type; here we have her:

*Magdelon n'est point difficile,
Comme un tas de mignardes sont:
Bourgeois et gens sans domicile,
Sans beaucoup marchander, luy font:
Un chascun qui veut la recoustre.
Pour raison, elle dit ce poinct:
Qu'il faut estre putain tout outre,
Ou bien du tout ne l'estre point.**

The poet appears to desire to cast a veil of pity and forgetfulness over those unfortunate ones who were but too often innocent of their misdeeds, impelled to them as they were by an unworthy stepmother, or counselled by an abominable procurer. But he does not pardon, on the other hand, the intermediaries of debauchery, those degraded old women and devout hypocrites, who, not being able to live any longer at the expense of their own withered beauty, still draw an infamous revenue from Prostitution by corrupting young girls, turning wives from the path of duty, and playing the implacable enemy to modesty in their sex. It is Regnier who gives us the admirable portrait of *Macette*, that female *Tartuffe*, whose male counterpart Molière undoubtedly meant to give us in his comedy of that name. The satire on *Macette* (and under this proverbial name, we are to recognize a number of famous courtezans of the end of the sixteenth century) was, perhaps, but a bit of personal spite, but it was commonly looked upon as a virtuously indignant poem against the procuresses in general; and Regnier, wholly debauched as he was, was regarded as a benefactor for having acted as the energetic mouthpiece of the opinion of decent folk respecting these detestable corrupters, who were so numerous, and who spread everywhere the poison of their perverted instincts.

**Translator's Note:—Madelon is not hard to please,
As a lot of lasses are:
Bourgeois or beggar, at their ease,
May have her without going far:
And to each one whom she may greet
She gives this reason, very pretty:
To be a whore is very meet,
Or not to be one: that is her ditty.*

*La fameuse Macette, à la cour si connue,
 Qui s'est aux lieux d'honneur en crédit maintenue,
 Et qui, depuis dix ans jusqu'en ses derniers jours,
 A soustenu le prix en l'escrime d'amours;
 Lasse enfin de servir au peuple de quintaine,
 N'estant passe-volant, soldat ny capitaine,
 Depuis les plus chetifs jusques aux plus fendans,
 Qu'elle n'ait desconfit et mis dessus les dents,
 Lasse, dis-je, et non saoule, enfin s'est retirée.**

This courtesan, who knew no other heaven than the heaven of her bed, flings herself into devotion and displays a striking repentance for her errors. She dresses herself without the courtesan's usual art, she fasts, she prays, she visits churches and convents, and she carries about with her rosaries and blessed beads, and is no longer occupied with any but pious works; she is to be found incessantly in front of the altars, trembling, prostrate and weeping, like the Magdalen, and, like the Magdalen, beating her breast; she is now one of the blessed; she is a saint whom everyone admires, and whose villainous past is hidden under the shining cloak of an austere repentance. Regnier, who remembers the high deeds of this great sinner, very much doubts her conversion and does not permit himself to be taken in by appearances. One day, as he comes to the house of a *filie*, whither his "fantasy" has led him, he is not surprised to see this old screech-owl appear, "entering with slow and deliberate steps, with modest words and eyes downcast," saluting the beauty with an *Ave Maria*. Regnier has time to hide behind a door without being perceived; from his hiding-place he can hear everything, and he lends an attentive ear to the speech of the holy hypocrite, who, after the usual moral and edifying common-places, brazenly broaches the subject of her visit by telling the young woman that she ought, "being beautiful, to have beautiful clothes." Macette knows a rich man who loves the poor innocent, and who

**Translator's Note:—*

The famous Macette, who is at Court so known
 That she is lodged in honor, honor shown,
 And who for ten years has been borne above
 At all the tourneys on the field of love,
 Tired at last of serving rank and file,
 Having ruined the soldier's and the captain's style
 And wrecked the riff-raff, even, at the rear,
 Where there is nothing that real warriors fear,—
 She, tired, I'm saying,—nor surfeited,—retires.

asks nothing more than to be permitted to spend money upon her; he will give her, whenever she is willing, fine habits of silk, pearls, rubies and everything necessary to set off the beauty of a woman. Regnier's mistress listens in astonishment to this strange advice, which she is far from expecting to hear from this execrable corrupter, who lays before her impudently the whole doctrine of Prostitution. What is honor "but an old saint no longer in repute?"

*La sage le scait vendre, ou la sotte le donne.**

The perfidious counsellor does not stop here in her shameful encouragements to debauchery; she goes on to unveil, without modesty, all the horrible secrets of her own shame. She employs all her cleverness and all her eloquence in perverting this young girl, who, while being no novice, is not yet a graduate prostitute; she lays aside her mask of decency and hypocrisy to show herself as she is in reality, in order to astound and fascinate the victim whom she would betray, by teaching her to enrich herself through her own dishonor. "My daughter," she says to her, in the most caressing voice:

*Non, non, faites l'amour et vendez aux amans
 Vos accueils, vos baisers et vos embrassemens.
 C'est gloire et non pas honte, en ceste douce peine,
 Des acquests de son lit accroistre son domaine.
 Vendez ces doux regards, ces attraits, ces appas:
 Vous-même vendez-vous, mais ne vous livrez pas.
 Conservez-vous l'esprit, gardez vostre franchise;
 Prenez tout, s'il se peut, ne soyez jamais prise. . . .
 Prenez à toutes mains, ma fille, et vous souvienn
 Que le gain a bon goust, de quelque endroit qu'il vienne.
 Estimez vos amans, selon le revenu:
 Qui donnera le plus, qu'il soit le mieux venu.
 Laissez la mine à part, prenez garde à la somme:
 Riche vilain vaut mieux que pauvre gentilhomme.
 Je ne juge, pour moy, les gens sur ce qu'ils sont,
 Mais selon le profit et le bien qu'ils me font.
 Quand l'argent est meslé, l'on ne peut reconnaistre
 Celui du serviteur d'avec celui du maistre.
 L'argent d'un cordon-bleu n'est pas d'autre façon,*

*Translator's Note:—The wise one sells, the silly gives it free.

Que celui d'un fripier ou d'un aide à maçon. . . .
Tous ces beaux suffisans dont la cour est semée
Ne sont que triacleurs et vendeurs de fumée;
Ils sont beaux, bien peignéz, belle barbe au menton:
Mais quand, il faut payer, au diantre le teston!
Et faisant des mourans et de l'ame saisie,
Ils croient qu'on leur doit, pour rien, la courtoisie.
Mais c'est pour leur beau nez! Le puits n'est pas commun;
Si j'en avois un cent, ils n'en auroient pas un. . . .
Qui le fait à credit n'a pas grande ressource:
On y fait des amis, mais peu d'argent en bourse.
Prenez-moi ces abbéz, ces fils de financiers,
Dont depuis cinquante ans les pères usuriers,
Volans à toutes mains, ont mis en leur famille
Plus d'argent que le roy n'en a dans la Bastille.
C'est là que vostre main peut faire de beaux coups.
Je scay de ces gens-là qui soupirent pour vous;
Car, estant ainsi jeune, en vos beautéz parfaites,
Vous ne pouvez sçavoir tous les coups que vous faites,
Et les traits de vos yeux, haut et bas esclancéz,
Belle, ne voyent pas tous ceux que vous blessez.
*Tel s'en vient plaindre à moy, qui' n'ose le vous dire! . . . **

**Translator's Note:—*

No, no, make love, and to your lovers sell
 Your kisses and embraces; charge them well.
 It is a glory with one's amorous pains
 And earnings to increase one's fair domains.
 Then sell your glances, anything to live;
 Even sell yourself—yes, sell, but do not give.
 Keep well your mind, and guard your liberty;
 Take all you can, but still be always free. . . .
 Take with both hands, my daughter, nor forget
 That gain is always good, where'er 'tis met.
 Esteem your lovers by the toll they pay;
 To him who pays the most, most welcome say.
 Forget all else; prefer whene'er you can
 A rich old villain to poor gentleman.
 For my part, I would never judge the trade
 Except by the profit which from each is made.
 The master's money or the servant's, which
 Is which I cannot tell: for both I itch.
 The silver of the Holy Ghost's own knight
 No different is from that of mason's wight. . . .
 All those fine beaux with whom the court is sown
 Are but smoke-vendors when the truth is known;
 Fine fellows they, fine beard upon the chin,

Regnier, whom this execrable Macette desired to get rid of, to the advantage of someone who would have paid dearly for his place, was unable to restrain a sign of wrath, and the old woman, turning at the noise, became aware of the presence of an auditor whom she feared. She raised the siege upon the instant, and hastened to leave, saying in a low voice: "I will see you tomorrow, *adieu, bonsoir, ma fille!*" The poet was tempted to take vengeance with his own hands upon this enemy of his amours and his happiness, but he doubtless did not care to make his mistress blush by letting her know that he had heard the advice to which she should not have listened. He pursued with his maledictions the old procuress, who had accused him of frequenting bawdy-houses, and who had been so determined to deprive him of his mistress's heart. It was of this heart that he thought, a heart at once simple and tender, noble and generous, now defiled with thoughts of vice and already converted to Prostitution. Macette had won out over Regnier, who, desolated and furious at being supplanted by a rival whose only merit was his money, proceeded to stigmatize, in violent verse, the filthy old hag whom the demon of lust had sent as ambassador to a poor but honest young girl. Following are a few strophes of the *Ode sur une vieille maquerelle*:

*Esprit errant, âme idolastre,
Corps vérolé, couvert d'emplastre,
Aveuglé d'un lascif bandeau;
Grande nymphe à la harlequine,
Qui s'est brisé toute l'eschine
Dusses le pavé d'un bordeau! . . .*

But as to pay, the devil take them in!
Pretending death, with hand upon the heart,
They think you should for nothing play your part,
For a fine nose! But I will quickly tell
These gentlemen this is no public well. . . .
And to give credit, that is ever worse:
You may make friends, no money in the purse.
Give me an abbot or a banker's son,
Whose fathers and their fathers, every one,
At robbing usury have got more gold
Than has the king, when all his wealth is told.
And that is where your hand may scoop its fill;
Some of that kind there are who have good will
For youth and beauty such as yours, may dear;
You do not know what blows you deal, I fear;
Your eyes now lofty and now on the ground,
They fail to see all those whom they sore wound:
One tells me this who dares not speak to you! . . .

*Je veux que partout on t'appelle
 Louve, chienne et ourse cruelle,
 Tant decà que delà les monts;
 Je veux que de plus on ajoute:
 Voilà le grand diable qui joute
 Contre l'enfer et les demons.*

*Je veux qu'on crie emmy la rue:
 Peuple, gardez-vous de la grue,
 Qui détruit tous les esguillons,
 Demandant si c'est aventure
 Ou bien un effet de nature,
 Que d'accoucher des arpillons.*

*De cent dons elle fut formée,
 Et puis, pour en estre animée,
 On la frotta de vif-argent:
 Le fer fut première matière,
 Mais meilleure en fut la dernière,
 Qui fist son cul si diligent.
 Depuis, honorant son lignage,
 Elle fit voir un beau ménage
 D'ordure et d'impudicité;
 Et puis, par l'excès de ses flammes,
 Elle a produit filles et femmes
 Au champ de ses lubricités. . . .*

*Vieille sans dent, grand' hallebarde,
 Vieux baril à mettre moutarde,
 Grand morion, vieux pot cassé,
 Plaque de lit, corne à lanterne,
 Manche de lut, corps de guiterne,
 Que n'est-tu déjà in pace?*

*Vous tous qui, malins de nature,
 En desirez voir la peinture,
 Allez-vous-en chez le bourreau;
 Car, s'il n'est touché d'inconstance,
 Il la fait voir à la potence
 Ou dans la salle du bordeaul**

*Translator's Note:—Fickle mind, idolatrous soul,
 Body covered with verole,

Regnier's vengeance thus immortalized the name of Macette, which became from then on a synonym for the word *maquerelle*, a synonym which the written and spoken language still preserves in the vocabulary of the servants' halls. The poet had not yet acquired wisdom, despite the unfortunate outcome of his amours, despite his unpleasant infirmities, despite his premature old age. And yet, if he always felt the same passion for women, he did not go to seek satisfaction for his passion in the same places; he avoided the houses of perdition, he

Lascivious fillet over eye;
A female harlequin very fine,
With a very battered spine
From the floor of brothel sty.

I would have them call you bitch,
Wolf and ass with cruel itch:
I should like them all to tell;
And I would have them add, what's more
There's the big devil of a whore
Who fights the devils and all Hell.

I would have the street-crier call:
People, guard you, guard you all,
For this hawk destruction likes,
Demanding if 'tis Nature's work,
And not, rather, sport or quirk,
To give birth to iron spikes.

Of a hundred gifts her shape was made
And then, to give life to this jade,
They rubbed her with quicksilver, last:
Of iron was built her skeleton,
But the last thing was best done,
Which made her old rump work so fast.

She has been faithful to her line;
She keeps a ménage very fine
Of ordurous impudicities;
Her flames have flared so very high,
They've brought more women to the sty,
More girls for her lubricities.

Toothless old wretch and halbert great,
Mustard-barrel and withered crate,
Old morion and broken jug,
Skinny bedslat, lantern-horn,
Lute-neck or ship's prop forlorn,
Why do we still see your mug?

Then all you, friends to evil's blight,
Who would view her portrait bright,
You've but to pass the hangman by;
If he's not faithless to his task,
On the scaffold you'll see her bask,
Or in the hall of brothel-sty.

looked better after his health, and he no longer ran blindly in pursuit of pleasure as he once had done, he tells us,

*Du temps que ma jeunesse, à l'amour trop ardente,
Rendoit d'affection mon âme violente,
Et que de tous costéz, sans choix ou sans raison,
J'allois comme un limier après la venaison.**

In an epistle to the Sire of Forqueveux, which is not, as has been supposed, a pseudonym for the Sire of Esternod, or of Desternaud, he develops, with a cynicism that is not lacking in naïveté, his novel theory of love; he always had a marked aversion for great ladies; he does not care "to serve, hat in fist;" he does not care to be in the galleys, like a convict; what he prefers is

*. . . . Une jeune fillette
Experte dès longtemps à courir l'éguillete,
Qui soit vive et ardente au combat amoureux . . . ,
La grandeur en amour est vice insupportable,
Et qui sert hautement est toujours misérable:
Il n'est que d'estre libre, et en deniers comptans,
Dans le marché d'amour acheter du bon temps,
Et, pour le prix commun, choisir sa marchandise. . . .***

M. Viollet-le-Duc, in his edition of Regnier (Paris, P. Jannet, 1854, in-18), says with reason, of this epistle: "It would be difficult to forgive Regnier his choice of subject, if it were not for the manner of his treating it. This work can afford us but a very bad opinion of his native delicacy and his morals."

Regnier felt that he was an old man, although he was not yet forty years of age; he had also become fearful as to the risks he

**Translator's Note:*—From the days of my youth, when a passion too quick
Rendered my soul all too ardent and sick,
And when, on all sides, without choice, without reason,
I ran like a hound after deer in the season.

***Translator's Note:*— . . . A young maid,
Long expert in the duties of her trade,
Lively and ardent in the jousts of passion
For haughtiness in love is far from nice;
Not to be borne, and miserable thrice:
There's nothing like freedom in the mart of love,
For one who is all bargaining above
And at the common tariff buys his wares.

ran, and he was quite willing to leave, as an heritage to his successors—"to the mignons," he tells us, "blind at such a sport"—

*Les boutons du printemps et les autres fleurettes,
Que l'on cueille au jardin des douces amourettes.**

He had a horror for apothecaries' remedies, mercury, *l'eau forte*, *l'eau de gayac* and sudorifics, which had deprived him of "his substance;" he was crippled in an arm and a leg: "like a mariner escaped from the storm," he had sworn never again to embark on the sea of Prostitution, and he dreamed of finding happiness in safe and peaceful relations with "a simple mistress;" but he was unable to realize this dream until after he had left the hand of his *refondeurs*. "Regnier," reports Tallemant des Réaux, in the *Historiettes* of Desportes, "died at thirty-nine years, at Rouen, where he had gone to be treated for the syphilis by one Sonneur. When he was cured, he wanted to give a dinner to his physicians. He served new wine of Spain, and they, to please him, permitted him to drink; he had as a result of it a pleurisy which carried him off in three days (22d of October, 1613)." This great satirist, wholly debauched as he was, was, none the less, loved and praised by his contemporaries, no one thinking to reproach him for the license of his poems, which were not so free as those of Sigongne, Desternod, Motin and Théophile. Although Regnier may be placed at the head of the poets of Prostitution, we must remember that, in his day, as M. Viollet-le-Duc observes, in his *Histoire de la Satire en France*, "the very word, *satire*, indicated an obscene work." The austere Boileau failed to take account of the manners and customs of the time, when he said of Regnier, in his *Art poétique*:

*Heureux si dans ses vers, pleins de verve et de sel,
Il ne menait souvent les muses au bordel,
Et si du son hardi de ses rimes cyniques
Il n'alarmait souvent les oreilles pudiques!***

But in order not to incur, himself, the reproach which he addresses to the creator of Macette and of the *Mauvais Gîte*, Boileau alters thus

**Translator's Note*:—The buds of spring and all the other flowers
Which one picks in love's sunny garden hours.

***Translator's Note*:—Happy if in his verse, full of salt and of verve,
His muse to the brothel did not too often swerve,
And if at his cynical boldness of rhyme,
Modest ears were not shocked greater part of the time.

the first two of the above verses, by weakening them without in the least altering the judgment which he had pronounced on his master in satire:

*Heureux si ses discours, craints du chaste lecteur,
Ne se sentaient des lieux que fréquentait l'auteur!**

**Translator's Note:*—Happy if but his style, which chaste readers fear,
Did not smell of a place to the author too dear.

CHAPTER LXXXI

MATHURIN REGNIER is not the only poet of this period in whose writings we find a vivid picture of Prostitution. The majority of his contemporaries and imitators did not in the least fear disgracing themselves by frequenting wine-shops and bawdy-houses, and it was altogether natural that their habits should be reflected in their works. Moreover, the sort of poetry which was approved at that time by the best readers affected the form and tone of satire, even when it did not assume the label. "The authors, and probably the public," says M. Viollet-le-Duc, in his *Histoire de la Satire en France*, "were then of the false persuasion, due to superficial erudition, that the style of satire ought to conform to the supposed language of the *satyrs*, those lascivious divinities of the Greeks." Hence, the obscenity, or, at least, the license, of the majority of satirical verses. It is not our plan to seek in the poets of the Regnier school all that might be found there which would provide us with much information and with many curious details relative to the history of public morals at the beginning of the seventeenth century; we merely propose to select from a few collections of satires published about that time various pictures of manners which will complete the one which Regnier has painted for us, from the life, in his *Macette* and in his *Mauvais Gîte*. These extracts, borrowed from rare and little-known works, will bring out new facets in the essentially changing aspect of Prostitution, although we are always to recognize, in those satires which we shall now run through from this point of view, the evident intention of competing favorably with the author of the *Macette*, in the invasion of that obscene filthy domain preëmpted by his profligate genius.

The Sire of Esternod is the first to offer a very inferior, and yet a remarkable, imitation of the *Macette*, which had been so applauded that it kept all the poets awake nights. Claude d'Esternod, or Dester-nod, was not, as has been believed, the pseudonym of François de Fourquevaux, Regnier's friend; it was the name of a worthy gentleman of Salins, who did not begin wooing the Muses until after a youth spent in military service; his poetry, therefore, in its rude license, is not unreminiscent of his former trade. Although he was governor of the Château of Ornans in Burgundy, this post left him sufficient

leisure to permit him to come to Paris, where his relations with the poets frequently led him into debauchery; but although these poets were, the majority of them, atheists or "Epicureans," like Théophile and Berthelot, Esternod continued to associate with his licentiousness a great piety and an almost fanatic zeal for religion. In one of the pieces in his *Espadon satirique*, printed for the first time at Lyons in 1619, Esternod brands, with a brutal and soldier-like energy, "the hypocrisy of a woman, who feigned to be devout and who was found to be a whore." This woman, whom he does not name, was one of those who cover their turpitudes with a mask of virtue, and who are as much esteemed by the world as they ought to be despised, if their conduct were known. There were then many more hypocrites of this sort than are to be found today, and Esternod was no dupe where their wiles and falsehoods were concerned:

*Et telle est au sermon tant que le jour nous luit,
Que j'ay veue au bordeau tout le long de la nuit.
Or une j'en cognois de semblable farine,
Qui est une Laïs et fait de la Pauline.**

He sketches for us the portrait of this depraved creature, who "plays the pious and plucks the lousy," distributes alms when she knows she is being watched, whose talk is only of holy water, indulgences and jubilees, who is incessantly saying her beads, and who does not appear to even so much as to think of the vanities of this world nor of the works of Satan. One night, the Sire of Esternod leaves his house, "sad, downcast and pensive," and with an empty purse; this last, indeed, was the cause of his sadness, for he had had ill luck at gaming, and had not been left even a six-crown piece

*Pour celles qui m'avoient jadis presté leur flus.***

He went then, *pedetentim*, hunched over like an old man and reflecting on his penury, which prevented his putting in an appearance in a place where everything had to be paid for. He walked where chance led him, scratching his perruque, without being able to think up a

**Translator's Note*:—I see one in the church at matin song
Whom I have seen in the brothel all night long,
Yes, seems to me, that powdered face I've seen:
She's Lais there, and here she is Pauline.

***Translator's Note*:—For the girls who formerly would have lent me all.

decent expedient for obtaining money or a plan for doing without it. Suddenly, he heard robbers coming, and in order to avoid them, although he had nothing to lose except his cloak, he took refuge in a dark alley and hid himself under the lean-to of a house. A window opened above his head; he gave a leap, "fearing the odor of amber.

*Et d'estre parfumé de quelque pot de chambre.**

But the chambermaid cried to him from above: "Hello, Monsieur! I will be down right away to open the door!" He did not reply, for he supposed that her remarks were addressed to someone else, and he was about to make a discreet departure, when the door opened and the chambermaid said to him in a low voice: "Enter, Monsieur, *sans feu ni sans chandelle*." He could not doubt that he had been taken for another; he hesitated to pursue the adventure; but at the moment when he was about to retire, someone pushed him inside, and the door closed upon him. Then he resigned himself and permitted himself to be conducted to the bed of "madame," who was waiting for him, or, at least, was waiting for another, between the covers. She addressed him as though he were an old acquaintance; the matter had gone too far for him to retrace his steps, and he went to bed without saying a word.

The Sire of Esternod was about to repent not having demanded a light, for he was beginning to conceive terrible suspicions concerning his companion's age. Finally, quite convinced that he was dealing with some toothless old wretch, he decided to leave. He arose, abruptly, without excusing himself for his impoliteness. The old woman, surprised and outraged by this proceeding, cried out and called Jacqueline to light the candle. She hid herself under the covers when she saw Esternod, who had never met her under such circumstances, and who smiled as he recognized the devout lady of the church. "*Bonjour, Mademoiselle!*" he said to her, in a bantering tone.—"*Quel grand diable, mon Dieu!* Go away!" cried the old woman in despair.

"—*Ma fortune maudite,
Qui vouloit que je sceus qu'estiez une hypocrite!*"**

*Translator's Note:—And being perfumed with some chamber-mug.

**Translator's Note:—"The evil luck on me does sit:
How should I know you were a hypocrite!"

She was desolated; she implored him to be discreet and not to betray an honest woman, whom he had it in his power to ruin; he reassured her and rallied her, at the same time:

. . . *Madame, n'ayez peur,
Qu'en ma discretion votre secret repose,
Car mon honneur y est plus que vous engagé.
M'estimerait-on pas quelque diable enragé?**

Notwithstanding these pretty promises, he saw to it that his silence was paid for, and did not leave the house until he had laid his hands upon ten crowns as the price of his services. He did not even have the modesty to let it be understood that he intended to distribute this money to the poor! The ignoble outcome of this adventure does not give us a very flattering opinion of the Sire of Esternod, who was not at all slow in publishing his sorry good fortune. There is ground for supposing that he did not even conceal the lady's name as he put into verse his adventures with this old dame, in order to pay her back the "good offices" he owed her:

*Bref, je te suis tant redevable,
Vieille, plus fine que le diable,
Pour avoir fait l'amour pour moy,
Que tu seras mon connestable,
Et mise à la première table
Si quelque jour on me fait roy.*

*Qu'à la teigne, qu'à la podagre,
A la migraine, à la chiragre,
De t'offenser soit interdit!
Et, après la mort filandière,
Deux asnes, dans une litière,
Te portent droit en paradis!***

**Translator's Note:—*Madame, have no fear:
Your secret in my keeping is quite safe;
My honor is involved as much as yours.
Do you think it is a devil here who roars?

***Translator's Note:—*In brief, I am so wholly yours,
Old lady, finest of all whores,
For having done this little thing,
That you my constable shall be,
And eat at the same board with me,
If some day I am king.

This Sire of Esternod, who had won his poetic spurs with a soldier's harness on his back, still exhibited, in his manners and in his language, all the coarseness of his former trade; he did not reckon with his purse, when he desired to purchase fresh fruit in the market-place of Prostitution. He avenges himself, in bitter and venomous verses, upon a woman whom he calls *la belle Madeleine*, who had refused to sell herself for fifty pistoles. It may be deduced, from certain passages in the piece, that this woman was being preserved, as the saying was, "for the mouth" of a great lord, and that the "old priestesses," or procuresses, who had discovered her in a provincial village were counting upon doing a good business with her. In any case, she was well watched over, and the Sire of Esternod knocked in vain at her door. Furious at this resistance, he gave vent to his wrath in a poem bearing the mint of the bawdy-houses; he massed his invectives to crush the poor wretch, "who would have none of him," into the gutter. He pictures her as old and decrepit, abandoned by her lovers, "rotten, gnarled, broken-winded and cross-eyed," regretting her past life and recalling with regret the good bargains which she had refused, and which she would never find again:

*Tu tiendras ces memes paroles:
 "Ou sont les cinquante pistoles
 Que jadis on me presentoit?
 Las! où sont les roses vermeilles?
 Que n'ai-je pris par les oreilles
 Le loup, alorees qu'il s'arrestoit!"**

The old age of dissolute women was, undoubtedly, sufficiently unalluring, and this was a thing that Esternod could not forgive. He especially could not forgive old sinners, who, in place of repenting the

Ringworm and gout be far from you,
 Headache and chiragra, too,
 And all that is not nice!
 And when death comes to take you there,
 Two asses and a litter bear
 Your body straight to paradise!

**Translator's Note:—*You shall mumble the same words o'er:
 "Oh, where are those pistoles of yore,
 The fifty that were offered me?
 Alas! Where are the roses red?
 Had I but seized Time's wolfish head,
 Before he had a chance to flee!"

errors of their youth, still sought, thanks to lying graces of the toilet, to practice an amorous deception; he took pleasure in fustigating with the lash of satire

*Ces lasches demoiselles
Qui replastrent leurs fronts, durissent leurs mamelles,
Reverdiscent leur sein, leur peau vont corroyant,
Alignent leurs sourcils, leurs cheveux vont poudrant,
Vermillonnent leur joue, encroustent leurs visages. . . .**

D'Esternod took Regnier for a model, as well as those poets of the tavern and the brothel who were his friends and rivals; the same sort of evil and unbridled life would naturally produce the same sort of poetry; but there was, between Regnier and D'Esternod, all the distance which separated Paris from the Château of Ornans. The author of the *Espadon satyrique* does not fail to encounter, in the suspect places, those shameful maladies which were the inevitable accompaniments of debauchery. Following Regnier's example, he is not ashamed to celebrate his misadventures in verse; but in that one smutty ode, which displays a talent of which the poet might have made better use, Regnier is quite surpassed. The Sire of Esternod possessed a soldier's brutal frankness, and made use of it to denounce to the public the mangy sheep which he would have liked to have chased from the fold of Prostitution. He does not repent having lived a disorderly life, but he blames himself for having trusted a miserable old woman, who had "worn the mitre countless times" in the public streets. Incorrigible libertine that he is, he exclaims,

*N'estois-je pas un vrai Jocrisse,
De contenter là mes amours!***

Satires were the fashion of the time, and the satirists, without caring whether or not they made their readers blush, never forgot to track down, among all vices, that of debauchery, or to pillory Prostitution.

One of these satirists, Thomas de Courval-Sonnet, was a little

**Translator's Note:— Those maids unblest
Who plaster their faces and pad out the breast,
Making their bosoms and their skin more fair,
Lining their brows and powdering their hair,
Rouging their cheeks and laying on a crust*

***Translator's Note:—Should I not be a true Jack-Pudding,
To satisfy my amours there!*

Norman squire, who, coming from Brie to Paris during the reign of Maria de'Medici to study medicine, set himself to making verses directed at the manners of the capitol. The reading of his poems, in which he is as much animated by a hatred of evil as he is by a love of good, gives us a very favorable idea of his character and his sentiments, in spite of trivial expressions and cynical images, which fill these works dedicated to the queen. This was the taste of the century, and the language of the courts themselves would appear to have been borrowed from the Courts of Miracles. We may believe, however, that Courval-Sonnet did not live in mire, like the majority of his satirist bretheren; the theory may even be advanced that he led a very regular life, and that he was never defiled with the filth of the bawdy-houses. His first collection, which appeared in 1620 (Paris, Rolet-Boutonné, octavo), evidences a sort of aversion and defiance on the part of the author toward women in general. In *Satire VI*, entitled *Censure des femmes*, he gives us a most unattractive portrait of the fair sex, whom he crushes beneath a load of insulting metaphors:

*L'enfer de nos esprits, le paradis des yeux,
L'aube de tous ennuis, tombeau des langoureux,
Purgatoire asseuré des bourses trop pesantes,
Repurgées et netyes (sic) aux flames plus ardentes
Et aux cuisants fourneaux de ce sexe amoureux
Qui droit a l'hospital rend l'homme comme un gueux.**

The Sire of Courval-Sonnet, in his capacity as a physician, desires to supply a corrective, by depicting the material ravages for which the *femme d'amour* all too frequently is responsible.

*Elle gaste la fleur de la verte jeunesse,
Déflore la beauté, advance la vieillesse;
Elle ride la peau, rend le front farineux,
Jaunit nostre beau teint, le plumbe et rend squameux:
J'entends, quand par excès le mestier on prattique,
Dans un bordeau lascif, avec femme publique.***

*Translator's Note:—Hell of our minds, the paradise of eyes,
Boredom's dawn, and tomb of all our sighs,
The purgatory sure of weighty purse,
Purged in the all too ardent flames and worse,
That flare in the furnace of this amorous sex,
Which to the almshouse sends us all as wrecks.

**Translator's Note:—She spoils the finest flower on youth's green page,

The poet has, always, a qualification to make in advance, by stating that he has all the respect in the world for virtuous ladies, and that he is addressing his remarks solely to women of bad manners. If we are to believe him, Prostitution was everywhere prevalent, and the greatest ladies did not disdain to "take up the trade" (*se mettre au métier*). He compares the amorous woman to a bark on which one drifts down the river of youth.

*De mesme, nous voyons tant de bonnes commeres,
Ne servoit qu'à un seull Mais ce sexe infidele,
Inconstant et leger, s'abandonne souvent
Au premier qui demande à passer le torrent
Des amoureux plaisirs
De mesme, nous voyons tant de bonnes commeres,
En servant de bateau, se rendre mercenaires,
Et mettre leur honneur, comme on dit, à l'encan,
Pour gagner une cotte ou un riche carcan,
Une bourse au mestier, des gands en broderie,
Une bague, un collet ou autre braverie.
Rien que meschanceté ne sort de leur boutique,
Et rare est le bien faict qu'une putain pratique!**

But Courval-Sonnet at once revises his words, he fears that he has outraged all women by unveiling the misdemeanors of the few, and he hastens to make the sex honorable amends. Following is the manner

Destroys all beauty and advances age;
She wrinkles the skin and makes the forehead white,
The complexion yellows, or with scales doth blight:
By which I mean, excessive custom given
In brothel low to public dame unshriven.

*Translator's Note:—

If only this skiff, this boat, this bark or wherry
Did serve but one! But the sex unfaithful very,
Changeful and light, too often does afford
A passage to the first who comes aboard,
Upon the amorous stream . . .
And so, we see so many good godmothers
Become a mercenary craft for others,
Putting their honor on the auction block
To gain a carcanet or charming frock,
A purse or gloves embroidered make a bawd,
A ring, a collar or some other gaud.
Nothing but evil in their shop you'll find:
Rare is a good deed in the whorish kind.

in which he speaks of his epigrams, which had displayed a tendency to be too general, and which had given the impression of referring to the entire sex:

*Ce discours seulement s'adresse aux vicieuses!**

The poet implies by “*vicieuses*” the women of evil life who did not care in what fashion they gained a testoon or a crown.

*Afin de piaffer et se faire paroistre
Aux lieux plus frequentez où l'on se fait connoistre,
Comme à l'église, au bal et banquets sumptueux,
Tournois, courses de bague et theatriques jeux,
Aux marches, assemblées et festes de village,
Où libres on les voit jouer leur personnage,
Le front couvert de fard, pour gagner des mignons
Et prendre dans leurs rets tousjours nouveaux poissons;
Ou bien à ces putains, tant hors qu'en mariage,
Qui riches de moyens, entretiennent à gages
Quelque bel Adonis, quelque muguet de cour,
Pour leur donner plaisir et les saouler d'amour.
Qui quelquefois sera caché dans la ruelle
D'un lit, toujours au guet, en crainte et en cervelle,
Sans tousser ni cracher, peur d'estre decouvert
Soit du mary jaloux ou de l'amant couvert.***

Thus, in this *Censure des femmes*, which is not equal to the famous satire of Boileau on the same subject, the Sire of Courval describes,

**Translator's Note*:—To the vicious only are these words addressed!

***Translator's Note*:—

Who paw the ground and always must be seen
In crowded places, there to play the queen,
To church, to ball, to banquet they must fling,
Theatre, tourney, runnings at the ring;
At market, assemblage or the village feast.
They play their part and never are the least,
Roused for the mignons whom to snare they wish,
Spreading their nets to catch always new fish;
And then there are those whores, both in and out
Of marriage, who their means substantial flout
For some Adonis, lily of the court,
Who'll give them pleasure and good amorous sport,
And who, while he lies hidden in the bed,
Fears for his life, and for his craven head;
He dares not cough or spit, lest he be revealed
To jealous husband or sweetheart concealed.

especially, two varieties of Prostitution which were very common at that period: the prostitution of women and that of men, one and the other having no other object than to contribute to the upkeep of the vile agents of debauchery. The women, whose ambition did not exceed a testoon or a crown for each conquest, prostituted themselves to whomsoever would pay it; the despicable men, who carried on a trade almost as abject, did not prostitute themselves, on the other hand, except to a single woman, who paid or "kept" them. The rôle of gallants of this sort was* not limited to satisfying secretly the passions of a few profligate old women; the mercenary being, attached to the service of a vicious woman, must also escort her to balls, dance with her, and see her home, in order to obtain

. . . *Le bas de soie ou l'habit de satin,
Les jartiers denteléz, l'eschar pe en broderie.***

At the expense of his "sweetie," the gallant

. . . *Brave et s'entretient
En habits fort pompeux, sans desbourser argent.****

Is it not hard to conceive how a work written in this style could have been dedicated to the Queen-Mother, to that Maria de'Medici, who, wholly Italian as she was, never came in for the faintest reproach in the matter of her morals? Is it not hard to understand how the Sire of Courval, who prided himself upon being a gentleman of good family, could have introduced into his moral poems the unclean jargon of the brothels? It must be stated, in his excuse, that the language of decent folk had not yet been determined, and that the most obscene word might occur even in a sermon, and all the more in poetry, which made use of its ancient privilege of saying everything.

The Sire of Courval-Sonnet frequently exaggerates things, over-stresses details, and lays on his color a bit too thick, as when, for example, he shows us *les epoux*

*Translator's Note:—Cf. the modern gigolo.

**Translator's Note:—Stockings of silk or cloak of satin make,
Fine-jeweled garters or embroidered scarf.

***Translator's Note:—. . . Bravely steps forth
In pompous habits, with no cost to him.

*Se mettant en hezard, aux bordeaux, aux estaples,
De gagner, par argent, le royaume de Naples,**

but[†] he does not exceed the bounds of the most scrupulous veracity, when he turns his master hand to giving us the portrait of a courtezan who had been famous, and who, upon becoming old, had returned to the obscure and miserable station from which she had started. It is to this courtezan that he addresses his XXVth Satire:

*Les chalands degoutéz tournent ailleurs leurs pas.
Tu vois diminuer tous les jours ta pratique:
Comme ce procureur, ferme donc ta boutique,
C'est bien force, à present que tu n'es plus des belles,
Que tu sois à present vendeuse de chandelles.
La femme est laide, après qu'elle a trente ans vecu:
Les roses a la fin deviennent gratte-cu.***

This latter piece of verse is still remembered by everybody, without any precise knowledge of its meaning or of the author to whom it is to be attributed. Courval-Sonnet advises this ancient *fille d'amour* to profit from what is left her; to get, swindle and ensnare money by all possible means; to seek to work upon her dupes by telling them that she fears the sergeant, and that she has put her petticoat and her *hongreline* in pawn; and finally, to lay up a little which will enable her to live by the work of her hands in her old age. But she does not listen out of this ear, and she cannot foresee that a day will come when the resources of Prostitution will wholly fail her; she cannot doubt, however, that she has become old, and she grows angry against the importunate giver of advice: "Enné!" she cries.

*Puisque j'ay de quoy vivre et de quoy m'habiller,
Le plus aisé travail pour moy n'est qu'un supplice;
Puisque j'ay de quoy vivre et de quoy m'habiller,*

*Translator's Note:—Trying their luck in the brothel and its staples,
To gain, through silver, the kingdom of all Naples.

**Translator's Note:—Disgusted buyers turn their steps elsewhere.
You see your custom falling off each day:
Then better shut up shop, and go your way;
Since you're no longer beautiful, old dear,
Why, candle-selling is your trade, I fear.
Woman is ugly when she's thirty-some,
And roses, in the end, a scratch-tail become.

*Qu'on me parle de rire, et non de travailler.
 Tout mon contentement est d'estre bien ornée:
 Une femme d'amour vit au jour la journée.**

The Sire of Courval does not endeavor to talk the language of reason to her any more, for the habit of vice has with her become incurable; he therefore ironically urges her to persevere in the path in which she is already so far gone; no remorse, no regret; each one here below has his destiny; that of a courtesan is to die a courtesan.

*Pratique habilement, en te moquant de moy,
 Tous les tours du bordel que tu sçais sur le doy . . .
 Tu possèdes un peigne, un charlit, un miroir,
 Une table à trois pieds qu'il fait assez bon voir,
 Un busc, un esventail, un vieux verre sans patte,
 De l'eau d'ange, du blanc, de la poudre, une chatte,
 Une paire de gands qui furent jadis neufs,
 Une boîte d'onguent, une houppe, des noeuds,
 Un poilon, un chaudron, une écuelle, une assiette;
 Pour te servir de nappe, un engin de serviette.***

This description of a prostitute's ménage at the beginning of the seventeenth century would be very exact today if it were applied to the majority of public women of low station. These creatures have changed neither in trade nor mode of life. Courval-Sonnet goes on to depict them all, from the life, in the person of one who had about reached the end:

*Tu n'apaises ta faim d'aucun friand morceau:
 Ta viande est du pain, ton breuvage est au seau;*

**Translator's Note:*—"Let no one wait until I sew or weave;
 At the lightest labor, I am sure, I'd grieve;
 So long as I have clothes upon my back,
 Talk but of joy to me, not labor's wrack
 My only care is myself to adorn:
 An amorous lady must look well each morn."

***Translator's Note:*—You show your cleverness in mocking me;
 You know the brothel tricks, I plainly see . . .
 You have a comb, a mirror and the rest,
 A three-legged table of the very best,
 A busk, a pan, a glass without a stem,
 Perfume and powder, how you cherish them!
 A cat, a pair of gloves which once were new,
 An ointment box, a tassel—motley crew!
 A kettle and a bowl, a lonely plate,
 A battered napkin for your meals of state.

*En esté, tu remplis ton ventre de salades;
 Extrêmement habile à bailler des cascades,
 A faire niche à l'un et l'autre caresser,
 A tirer un present; cela fait, le chasser;
 Insensible aux bienfaits, conteuse de sornettes,
 Impudente menteuse et qui scait ses deffaites;
 Ton mestier est infame et doux infiniment;
 C'est pourquoy l'on n'en sort que difficilement.**

The Sire of Courval-Sonnet left Paris as soon as he had obtained his doctorate at the Faculty of medicine; he was not longer young, but he had weathered all the storms of youth. He settled at Rouen, there to take up the practice of his art; but while healing the sick, he all the while composed satires, and these satires always had as object the correction of morals, which would not appear to have been any better in the provinces than they were at the capital. It was at Rouen that he published, under the veil of anonymity, those *Exercices de ce temps*, which had the honor of a number of successive editions (by Lehay, 1627, octavo; by Laurens Maurry, 1631, quarto; by Delamare, 1645, octavo), but the poet did not dream of correcting the coarseness of his style. The *Exercices* are very curious sketches of manners, in which we find a number of details that are in place in a history of Prostitution. "Courval has but imitated Regnier in what there is that is blame-worthy in the latter," says M. Viollet-le-Duc (*Catalogue des livres composant sa Bibliothèque poétique*, with bibliographical, biographical and literary notes, Paris, Hachette, 1843, octavo); "he had not even taken the pains to conceal his thefts: his *Débauché* and his *Ignorant* are, evidently, modeled upon the Xth and XIth satires of Regnier; in his capacity of physician, he makes an immoderate use of unsavory terms and descriptions, to the point of nausea." We shall here concern ourselves with three satires, the first, fifth and the eleventh, entitled, respectively, *le Bal*, *la Promenade* and *le Débauché*.

**Translator's Note:—*You feed your hunger with no tidbit fine;
 Your rations bread and in a pail your wine;
 With salads you did once your belly fill—
 Ah, you were clever, when you had the will,
 At making love and getting all love's gain,
 And then at getting rid of the well-plucked swain;
 A graceless wretch, a teller of small tales,
 An impudent old liar, by the scales;
 Your trade of infamy does like you well,
 And that is why 'tis hard to quit your hell.

We see, from the first, that there existed in the seventeenth century, public balls sufficiently like those which are now the mode at Paris and in the great cities in France, and that these exercised an unfortunate influence over the people. In the time of Courval-Sonnet, one went to such balls as these to seek adventure. Here is the manner in which he pictures them for us, in a satire in which he himself occupies the stage:

*Les desirs depravéz se descouvrent au bal,
Salle de la desbauche où jadis la jeunesse
Alloit comme au bordel chercher une maistresse.
On n'y voit que flambeaux, que brillants, que beauté,
Cupidons en campagne, amours de tous costéz. . . .
L'un y va pour danser, l'autre a d'autres desseins;
L'un y cherche une femme et l'autre des maistresses. . . .**

It is to be seen that the Sire of Courval-Sonnet had not become any more restrained in his language upon returning to his native province; but he no longer dedicates his verses to the queen, who was probably not grateful to him for the former dedication. The poet-physician devotes his second collection to what is, undoubtedly, a satire on Norman manners. The licentious dance-hall to which he introduces his reader is sufficiently like the *musicos*** of Holland; we may suppose that this dance-hall was at Rouen, where the author then dwelt. Courval-Sonnet there meets a woman, with whom he enters into a conversation that soon turns to gallantry; he presses his point and makes propositions which are a little too lively; these the lady at first rejects with indignation. "What!" she cries, with an air of modesty, "Speak to me of love? I am a good woman!"

*Et deux heures devant, auprès des chambrières,
Un jeune cavalier lui tailloit des croupières!****

**Translator's Note*:—Depraved desires at the ball transpire,
House of debauch, where our youth go to seek
Their mistresses, as in the brothel's reek.
Torches and brilliance, beauties everywhere:
All Cupid's company is surely there. . . .
Some go to dance, and some for other reasons;
One seeks a wife and one a mistress sleek.

***Translator's Note*:—A low music-hall, gaff or pot-house.

****Translator's Note*:—And two hours before, like any chambermaid,
A young cavalier had saddled well this jade!

However, after a few shows of prudish resistance, she is soon on familiar enough terms with the new gallant, who offers her refreshments, which she does not refuse. She eats and drinks then as though her belly had been empty since the night before. In her gluttony, she so overloads her stomach that she is soon forced to leave the ball in order to relieve herself of a portion of her indigestible burden; but no sooner is she somewhat relieved than she reënters the hall and begins once more her visits to the buffet; the hearty mouthfuls that she swills down now no longer inconvenience her, and she feels that she is sufficiently prepared to undergo the fatigues of the night. It is in this state that the Sire of Courval leads her away from the ball, whispering to her:

*Si chaste on en revient, c'est grand coup d'aventure;
De la table al la danse, et de la danse au lit.**

Such was the ball and such the aftermath. Our poet there meets a beauty whom he had courted, but who had not given him so much as a ray of hope. On this day, however, he was kindly received, smiled upon, and invited to come and spend the day in a house of pleasure, where a joyous company was assembled. Courval-Sonnet did not resist this seductive invitation, but accepted his part in the proposed picnic; he mounted a coach beside his charming companion, and let himself be taken, with eyes shut, to a small rustic retreat, where he found already assembled twenty or thirty amorous couples, who did nothing else all the day long except give themselves to pleasure amid the lawns and flowers. It was a saturnalia of debauchery, and the poet pictures it for us with his accustomed cynicism, after having described this place of pleasure.

*Où respire l'amour, où Vénus prit naissance.***

He is none too clear as to whether or not he followed these bad examples; while admitting that he remained sufficiently master of his senses to escape the dangers of this voluptuous occasion, he confesses to having been the witness to incredible acts of Prostitution, which took place all about him, and which did not even seek concealment under the transparent veil of modesty. These brazen lovers were bent

**Translator's Note:*—'Tis an adventure to make chaste return;
From table to the dance, from dance to bed.

***Translator's Note:*—Where breathes love, and Venus has her birth—

upon repeating the shameful scenes of the ancient mysteries of Isis.

The Sire of Courval keeps nothing from us as to what he saw in this house, which was quite on a footing with the most scandalous dens of public Prostitution. His powers of expression fail him, however, and he is unable to give expression in a lively and picturesque manner to the strange memories left him by his outing in the fields. He is disgusted and saddened by this day of debauchery and this renders him indignant against the whole feminine sex; for he thus ends his satire, by recalling the famous one of Jean de Meung against women:

*Ainsi s'accroît le vice et pullulle en tous lieux;
Si l'une fait de mal, l'autre ne fait pas mieux,
Car toutes vous serez, vous estes ou vous fustes,
De fait ou de puissance ou de volonté, pustes.**

In the satire which has for title *le Débauché*, the Sire of Courval relates for us in passing good verse a weird episode of vagrant Prostitution, which could not have been so rare a one at this period, when the provinces were crossed by bands of male and female gypsies, living beyond the confines of society, knowing no restraint nor law, and given over from childhood to the most unclean debauchery. It was among these wandering bands that vicious men went only too often to seek mercenary pleasures and unnatural satisfactions. All the women who were a part of this nomadic population were, from the age of ten, trained to this infamous traffic, and in order to find a virgin among them, it would have been necessary to take them in their earliest infancy. Morals and public health suffered equally from the daily contact of the population with these wretched creatures, who left nothing but defilement in their wake. The Sire of Courval is, perhaps, dramatizing an adventure of his youth, depicting himself under the name of the *Débauché*, in order to let us know how he had been punished for his first escapade, which served at least to render him wise, and to inspire in him a horror for vice:

*Asservy sous la main d'une mère importune,
Fils de famille ensemble et batteur de pavé,
Sans argent, sans crédit, aux dettes entravé,*

*Translator's Note:—And so, vice grows and thrives in every place;
If one is bad, another shows worse grace,
And all of you are, have been, or shall be
Strumpets in fact, intent or memory.

*Bouffy d'ambition, d'amour, de frenaisie,
D'orgueil, de vanité, de folle fantaisie,
Je prends la clé des champs et sors, d'un grand matin,
Du logis du patron, sous le bras mon butin,
Trois testons, deux ducats et dix sols dans ma bourse,
Des souliers neufs aux pieds pour aider à ma course.**

This was all the fortune of the wandering knight, who left Rouen and all the other good cities of Normandy to go and seek fortune elsewhere. He arrived, one evening, at the town of Saint-Martin (de Boscherville, undoubtedly), and he met there a troop of gypsies who had come to pass the night:

*. . . . Blesches et charlatans,
Bohémiens, mattois, bons joueurs de merelles,
Joueurs de gobelets, putains et maquerelles,***

girls, women, pages, valets, apes, trained animals, carts filled with drugs, with perfumes, with finery and with merchandise of all sorts, in which the commerce of these cheating (*attrapeurs*) vagabonds consisted. The newcomer approached their wagons "to see their utensils," and above all, to speak to one of their girls

*Qui lui ravit le coeur du charme de ses yeux.****

But he was badly enough received by this buxom lass, who snubbed him and threatened to have him brained; but she speedily changed her tone and became as obliging as she had been at first sullen and severe. She suggested to this novice, who spoke to her of love, that they become better acquainted, and conducted him to the room of an

**Translator's Note:—*Reared by a mother's hand importunate,
I in the street did many lessons get;
Moneyless, creditless and crushed with debt,
Ambition, love and frenzy beckoned still;
Pride, vanity and folly ruled my will;
And so, I left, upon a morning bright,
My patron's house, with baggage very light,
Ten sous, two ducats and three testoons—yea,
And brand-new shoes to help me on my way.

***Translator's Note:—*Great cheats and charlatans,
The crafty Gypsies, good at hopscotch game,
Jugglers and whores and pimps of evil fame.

****Translator's Note:—*Who had ravished his heart with the charm of her eyes.

inn, where they might continue a tête-à-tête from which the poor lad was not to profit.

Barely had they gone up to this room and sat down upon the edge of the bed, the only seat there was, when she burst into tears and began lamenting her unhappy fate, assuring him that she was a good girl, and that she had been kidnapped by these charlatans; she told him it was quite against her will that she was leading so disorderly a life, one as little suited to her feelings as to her birth.

And there was our young man, waiting and more amorous than ever. He swore to the beauty that he would deliver her from this odious servitude, and that he would take her back to her parents.

A rendezvous was made for that evening; as midnight struck the two lovers found themselves behind a stable, a hundred paces from the inn where they both lodged:

*Elle y vient, je m'y trouve: elle a dessous son bras
Un coffret dans lequel elle avoit mis deux draps,
Un morceau de coutil, un peigne, des brassières,
Un demi-ceint d'argent, des gands et des jartières:
C'estoit là son butin, c'estoit là son valliant. . . .**

This passage shows that the women of evil life, expelled from the cities by the ordinance of 1560, had been taken to the country by migratory merchants, comedians and charlatans, who went from place to place displaying their merchandise, of which the filthiest form of Prostitution was always an essential part.

The arrival of a troupe of these gentry must have been, in each village where they stopped, the signal for all sorts of misdemeanors: and when the civil or ecclesiastical authorities would wake up to these excesses, which had suddenly become as widespread as an epidemic among a law-abiding populace, the culprits would long since have departed, bag and baggage, leaving behind them their dupes and victims.

The girl and her ravisher, who feared being pursued by the gypsies, walked along all night long, little burdened, it is true, with apparel or with silver; they came at daybreak to a small village, where they

**Translator's Note:*—She came to meet me there, beneath her arms
A box in which she kept her few slight charms,
A bit of ducking, comb and brassière,
A little silver, gloves and garters—there
Was all her booty, all her wealth. . . .

believed that at last they would be safe from pursuit; they knocked at the door of the last house in this village; it was a frightful hovel, where teamsters and peddlers dwelt, but the lovers could not have been any happier in a palace than they were in this lodging

*Escarte du chemin et loin du voisinage.**

They were given a room; the girl sent down for wine and ham; they drank, they supped, they went to bed; the debauchee dropped at once into the most profound slumber. His bed-companion, however, had no thought of doing anything of the sort. She arose noiselessly, when it was quite day; and crafty one that she was—but let him tell it, as he curses her:

*. . . Au sortir du coucher,
Ayant tiré de moy ce qui m'est le plus cher,
Endormy de travail, las de trop longue veille,
Ivre de ses appas et d'excès de bouteille,
Estendu dans le lit, sans poulx, sans sentiment. . . .
Trousse quille et bagage, et m'enlève ma bourse;
Puis, droit où je la prins, s'en retourne à la course.***

When the poor devil awoke, he stretched out his hand, still half asleep, and found no one by his side. He called, he waited, and then he perceived that his purse was gone with the adventuress, who had not even left him enough to pay the score. He was only able to leave the hostelry by leaving behind him a portion of his belongings. He was already disgusted with a wandering life, and, ashamed of having, at his first step, fallen into debauchery, he entered the first convent which he found upon his way and sought hospitality of the monks. His plan was to do penance and to devote himself to the service of God. He thought thus to ease his troubled conscience; and he would have forgotten, in prayers and self-macerations, the cruel deception he had met with upon his first venture in the world of sin, if certain

**Translator's Note:—Secluded from the road and far from neighbors.*

***Translator's Note:— . . . On leaving the bed,
Having taken all I had while I was dead
From labor and fatigue, drunken at once
With wine and with her charms, and like a dunce,
Was lying there without a sign of life. . . .
She took my bag and baggage and my purse
Then went her way, followed only by my curse!*

insistent pains had not recalled it to him. He found that he had been left a sad souvenir by the prostitute who had deceived and robbed him; the affliction grew worse every day, until it came to be a serious matter. The unfortunate fellow could not even hide the shameful results of his indiscretion, but was obliged to renounce the cloister and leave the convent,

*Les bras farcis de galle, et les cuisses, de cloux.**

He was too seriously ill to risk treatment in a provincial town, and he did not have money enough to betake himself to Paris. It is then that he vows to the Furies the wretched one who has put a devouring poison into his veins. He exclaims:

*Fille ingrate, maudite, inconstante et sans foy,
Ne te suffisoit-il pas d'enlever ma valise,
M'ayant laissé lassé, gisant nud, en chemise,
Sans m'affliger des maux de tes embrassemens,
Que tu avois gagnés par trop de changemens,
Impudique Laïs, prestresse de Cythère,
Scaldrine à tous venans, Tisyphone, Mégère! . . . ***

The disease had time to make terrible progress before the repentant debauchee, who suffered like one possessed, was able to put himself into the hands of the physicians of Paris. The treatment was as painful as the malady, and when the patient might believe himself cured, he was no longer anything more than a skeleton, a shadow, a decrepit and disgusting old man. He returned in this state to his patron, who had pity on him and consented to take him back; he had learned too well, and at his own expense, how fatal debauchery is to faith of soul and health of body ever to fall back into the snares of Prostitution.

The Sire of Courval-Sonnet, in writing satires with a pen that was frequently dipped in the mire, was animated, at least, by good intentions and prided himself upon correcting the manners of his time,

**Translator's Note:—*With arms all galled and thighs all boils.

***Translator's Note:—*Ungrateful girl, accursed, without faith,
Was it not, then, enough, you wicked flirt,
To take my clothes and leave me but my shirt,
But you must also, with your foul embrace,
Defile my body with your shameful trace?
Immodest Laïs, Cythera's priestess true,
Scaldrina, Tisyphone and Megaera you!

which the poets of renown had done all they could to render more vicious and more corrupt. It might be said that never had French poetry been so licentious, so abominable, as during the regency of Maria de'Medici: it would seem to have had no other purpose than to exalt the delirious senses and to celebrate immodestly, the deeds and prowesses of the most infamous of rakes. It was the young court which encouraged this degradation on the part of the poets and their trade; it was the court which furnished, through its own mis-demeanors, the material for these immodest compositions. It is to be remarked, however, that the first prosecutions directed against a bad book, as an outrage to morals and public decency, dates from this period, when the Sigognes, the Motins, the Berthelots, and the Théophiles were defiling the French tongue, by forcing it to express horrible obscenities under the guise of the Latin priapic rites. The trial of Théophile and his co-defendants with reference to the *Parnasse Satyrique*, is the point of departure for a whole new jurisprudence, one which classifies obscene works among the excitations to debauchery, and which demands an accounting of the authors as being guilty of attempts at public demoralization. But this jurisprudence, although based upon a high degree of wisdom, had difficulty in finding a foothold in France, for the reason that it offended literary custom and was in opposition to the French spirit of liberty. Previously, there had been no suspicion that a crime might exist in connection with the publication of one of these works, which were known as *gaillardes*, and which were not subject to any law of decency, so long as they did not touch upon either politics or religion. Théophile and his friends were so imprudent as to offend religion, and to commit a crime which was then known as atheism or Epicureanism. Their poems were printed by book-dealers, who dared to place their names on the title-pages of the books which they sold under the very eyes of the magistrates, and even in the corridors of the Palace of Justice. These poems were so smutty that we may ask ourselves today how it is the bookseller and the author did not blush at being put, so to speak, in such a pillory. The Court delighted in such works, and Théophile Viaud, who had come to Paris in 1610 to enter upon a poetic career, received more honor and applause for becoming the obscene laureate than did all the other writers put together who had employed their talents only in respectable and moral compositions. Let us repeat once more, with M. Viollet-le-Duc, that, in those days, by "satire" was understood a

piece of "free" and frequently obscene poetry, and that the satiric poets were those who applied their brazen talents to the hymning of Prostitution. Théophile, in this, was past-master, and his unruly manners were only too well reflected in his writings.

Decent folk viewed with indignation these licentious poems, which perverted the youth by offering them dangerous food for the sensual passions. In 1617, the book-seller, Antoine Estoc, had published a duodecimo volume entitled *Recueil des plus excellans (sic) vers satyriques de ce temps, trouvés dans les cabinets des sieurs Sigognes, Regnier, Motin, qu'autres plus signales poètes de ce siècle*.^{*} This collection, in which license of thought vied with that of expression, achieved a prodigious success among libertines. The police, who had not thought of interfering with the sale of the first edition, naturally did not object to a reprinting of the work. It was Bellaine, one of the most respected book-dealers of Paris, who reprinted the collection, greatly augmented, in 1618, under this title: *Cabinet satyrique ou recueil de poésies gaillardes de ce temps, composées par Sigognes, Regnier, Motin, etc.*^{**} These two editions had appeared with the privilege of the king! The publisher (it was Berthelot or Colletet, or Frencicle, and it may be that all three had a hand in the work) announced, in the preface to the edition of 1616, that he was pleased to have rendered it "more perfect and better ordered than the first, in which there had been much unevenness, lack of coherence and confusion throughout." The first edition had been sold out in three months (see the Advertisement of the anonymous publisher); the second went almost as rapidly, and the bookseller who had published the edition of 1617, Antoine Estoc, proceeded to reprint the *Cabinet Satyrique*, in 1620. Up to then, book-sellers, publishers and others had not been molested; although Théophile, it is true, had been condemned to temporary banishment, by reason of his morals rather than his verse, and the knight of the watch had given him, in the month of May, 1619, orders to leave the realm; but he did not remain long at London, where his reputation and the recommendations of his friends at the court of France had caused him to be received with much enthusiasm. He, no more than Sigognes, Motin and the other satirists, suffered reproach for having printed

^{*}*Translator's Note*:—"Collection of the most excellent (*sic*) satiric verse of this age, found in the closets of the Sieurs Sigognes, Regnier, Motin, as well as others among the most distinguished poets of this century."

^{**}*Translator's Note*:—"Satiric Closet, or anthology of the merry verse of this age, composed by Sigognes, Regnier, Motin, etc."

licentious verses, which "the connoisseurs of letters and of poetry" had looked upon with a very favorable eye, and which they had seen fit to rescue from oblivion. Théophile was pensioned by the king and by the house of Montmorency; Motin had a canonry at Bourges; Sigognes was Governor of Havre. But Théophile had the misfortune to become involved in a quarrel with the Jesuit, Garasse, who, in his *Doctrine curieuse des plus beaux esprits de ce temps*, attacked him in the most furious manner, accusing him of atheism and of libertinism. Père Garasse had carried his hatred to the point of falsifying his enemy's verses to which he attributed an irreligious sense. Théophile brought to justice the Jesuit and his book, which latter he caused to be seized and suppressed, after having proved, manuscript in hand, that the verses which had been quoted to ruin him had been notably distorted. Garasse did not look upon himself as beaten; he published his Apology, in which he spared neither Théophile nor the "fine spirits of this time or those reputed such."—"Never," he says, (Chapter 12, page 152), "were the obscenities of Carpocras so well known in the cities of Greece as are the obscenities of Viaud, the blasphemies of Lucilio, and the impieties of Charron in France." Behind Garasse there was a powerful Society, which had sworn to ruin Théophile: the Jesuits had espoused the quarrel of their brother-member, Garasse, who had inspired them with his own bellicose humor. Under these circumstances, a book-seller put to press a new edition of obscene verses entitled: *Le Parnasse des poètes satyriques, ou Recueil des vers gaillards et satyriques de nostre temps*. This collection contained a number of pieces of verse with Théophile's name, which had been inserted in this collection without the author's knowledge or consent; but the rumor ran about, nevertheless, that the entire collection had come from Théophile's hand, and before the first copies of the *Parnasse Satyrique* were in circulation, the poet, who had been advised that this shameful publication was attributed to him, had gone himself to denounce this book to the Provost of Paris, declaring that there had been printed in it, without his consent, various pieces of verse which he had in reality composed, but which he had not destined for printing. The Provost of Paris, by reason of this declaration, rendered a decision against the printer, caused the book to be seized in the book-shop and the book-seller to be imprisoned, and ordered the destruction of the work. This order would not appear to have been carried out, and various copies with new titles and bearing neither

name nor publisher were circulated under cover in Paris, where they were curiously sought after by all libertines. The imprisoned bookseller (we believe it was Pierre Belaine) had declared that Théophile was not without knowledge of the publication of the *Parnasse Satyrique*. Parliament then took up the affair, and Théophile found himself brought to trial as the author of incriminating verses and a condemned work.

There was another Jesuit, Père Voysin, friend of Père Garasse, who denounced Théophile, and who produced a number of witnesses in support of his denunciation. Théophile was accused not only of an offense against public morals, but also of atheism, this latter accusation taking precedence over all others, although it was founded only on a few verses, philosophic in character rather than sacrilegious. The poet, faced by the prospect of a criminal trial, the work of his enemies, believed that discretion lay in absence; and his flight, which, as he himself says, "was only from fear, gave rise to a suspicion of crime." The trial took its course, in the absence of the accused. Garasse and the Jesuits pursued the latter with renewed fury, in their books and in their sermons; they reproached him, above all, with having corrupted the youth by his poems, by his discourse and by his example. They pictured him as the sole author of the *Parnasse Satyrique*, although this collection contained the verses of all "the most noted" (*les plus signalés*) contemporary poets. Following are the terms in which the Jesuit, Théophile Raynaud, speaks of this infamous publication, in his treatise, *De Theophilis* (page 229): *Opus item, cui titulus est Parnassus satyricus; supra quasvis Apuleii, Luciani, Romantii a Rosa, ac similibus scriptorum, camarinas grave olentissimum, et ad juvenilis pudoris cladem ac totius honesti exterminium, in diaboli incude fabrefactum, hujus putentissimi ingenii foetus est. Credi vix potest quanta mala spurciloquus iste juventuti intulerit: qua infamibus scriptionibus, quâ colloquiis et consuetudine familiari.** Although the *Parnasse Satyrique* was an execrable book, and one which well deserved the honor done it of supposing that it had been dictated by the demon of lust, this would not, perhaps, have been sufficient to bring about the condemnation of Théophile, for the printing and sale of obscene books was then tolerated, and we have already seen the

**Translator's Note:*—The author states that the work in question is more reprehensible and a graver danger to youth than the writings of Apuleius, Lucian or any of the ancients, being nothing less than the work of the Devil.

kind of books which were even dedicated to the queen, and which appeared with the King's privilege; but there were other grudges against the author in question. It was asserted that he had proclaimed his atheism in the treatise, *De l'Immortalité de l'âme*, which was but an imitation of Plato's *Phædrus*; there was an assured rumor that he had organized a secret society of atheists and libertines, the object of which was to pervert youth by means of secret writings and word of mouth; finally, a number of witnesses were brought forward who declared that they had heard the poet singing his three songs in a "debauch," that is to say, in an orgy, and who stated that they had learned from his own mouth a number of impious verses. It was thus that Parliament came to concern itself for the first time with these detestable books, which so outraged public modesty, and Théophile's trial soon involved a number of his friends, who had collaborated, more or less, in the *Parnasse Satyrique* and other collections of the same sort. A warrant was issued for Berthelot, Colletet and Frenicle; but it was not executed except in the case of the last named, who was the least guilty, and who made no attempt to escape justice. Berthelot and Colletet went into hiding, like Théophile. There is cause for astonishment in the fact that the Sire of Esternod, who had composed verses still more infamous than those of these satiric poets, was not included in the prosecution directed against them.

Parliament was greatly moved by the dangers of youth, thus exposed to the pernicious excitations of obscene poetry, and was not slow in establishing a system of jurisprudence to protect public morality, classifying among the crimes of *lèse-majesté*, divine and human, the composition and publication of bad books. On the 19th of August, 1623, a sentence was rendered by the Court, the High Chamber and Tournelle, assembled, against Théophile, Berthelot, Colletet and Frenicle, "authors of sonnets and verses containing the impieties, blasphemies and abominations mentioned in the very pernicious book entitled *le Parnasse Satyrique*;" Théophile, Berthelot and Colletet, "truly contumacious, attainted and convicted of the crime of divine *lèse-majesté*, for reparation," were condemned "as follows, the said Théophile and Berthelot to be led and conducted from the prison of the Conciergerie, in a tumbril-cart, to the principal door of the church of Nôtre Dame in this city of Paris, and there on their knees, head and feet bare, in their shirts, the rope around their necks, holding each in their hands a burning torch of the weight of

two pounds, to say and declare that, very wickedly and abominably, they have composed, caused to be printed and exposed for sale the book entitled *Le Parnasse Satyrique*, containing blasphemies, sacrileges and abominations there mentioned against the honor of God, His Church and public decency, for which they repent and seek pardon of God, of the King, and of justice; this done, they shall be led to the place de Grève of this city, and there the said Théophile shall be burned alive, his body reduced to ashes, the said ashes cast to the winds, and the said books shall likewise be burned, and Berthelot shall be hanged and strangled on a scaffold, which for this purpose shall be there erected, if they can be taken in their persons; if not, the said Théophile shall be punished in effigy and Berthelot hanged in effigy by a figure attached to the said scaffold; all and each of their goods are declared confiscated, and from them shall be taken the sum of 4,000 pounds in fine, applicable to pious works, as the Court shall advise." As to Frenicle, who was a prisoner, the King's Procurator-General was to lodge a more ample indictment against him on the points brought out in the trial. Moreover, "the said Court addresses prohibitions to all persons, of whatever quality and condition they may be, against having and retaining in their houses any copy of the *Parnasse Satyrique*, or other works of the said Théophile, it being also enjoined upon them to bring within twenty-four hours to the criminal jail here any such works, to be burned and reduced to ashes, with the provision that those in whose possession such works shall be seized shall be declared to be the perpetrators of the said crime and shall be punished like the accused." Finally, four book-sellers, Estoc, Sommaville, Bilaine and Quenel, who had printed Théophile's works, were to be "taken bodily and led as prisoners from the prison of the Conciergerie to the Palace, there to be heard and interrogated upon any facts resulting from the said trial; and in case they are not to be apprehended, they are to be given three days' time, by sound of trumpet and public cry, to appear at the said place, and their goods shall be seized and commissioners appointed to take charge of them until they shall have obeyed." (See the third volume of the *Histoire de Nostre Temps* by Cl. Malingre, Paris, Jean Petitpas, 1624, pp.330 and following.)

This memorable decree may be looked upon as the first act of repression and chastisement of the press, from the point of view of public morals. It was executed the very day it was handed down.

"A mannekin (*fantasme*) was made," Malingre tells us, "clad very nearly like the said Théophile, which was put in a tumbril-cart and taken before the church of Nôtre Dame, there to make honorable amends, and then was burned *en Grève*." As soon as Théophile, who was hidden away in the château of the Baron de Panet, learned of his execution in effigy, he resolved to leave France and made his way in disguise to the frontier; but his description had been sent ahead, with an order of arrest, to all the marshals' provosts. He was recognized on the road to Catelet, and the provost of Leblanc seized him. He was put upon a horse and brought back to Saint-Quentin, and from this city, where he remained in secret a number of days, he was transferred in irons to the Conciergerie of Paris. He was then locked up in the dungeon of Ravillac, where he spent eighteen months, before Parliament deigned to take up a review of his case. However powerful his friends may have been, they availed him nothing against the implacable resentment of the Jesuits. Théophile obstinately denied that he was the author or the publisher of the *Parnasse Satyrique*, which had given rise to the whole proceeding; for upon the other counts contained in the accusation, the defendant would have had little difficulty in proving his innocence. Parliament was absolutely determined to discover and punish with a terrible severity the impious libertines who had published this frightful collection of erotic and sodadic poetry. The book-sellers had fortunately been able to clear themselves, or at least to have their case thrown out of court. Berthelot and Colletet, condemned for contumacy, had not been taken, and Frenicle had been released. Théophile always protested his innocence, and the Procurator-General obtained from the Court permission to have read in all the parishes, at the sermon of the high mass, an ecclesiastical admonition, under date of the 24th of October, 1623, in which the official of Paris issued a solemn warning, under pain of excommunication, to "all those, male or female, who possessed knowledge that, before or since such a time, certain malefactors had made, composed and written, or caused to be written, printed and published, a number of obscene sonnets, satires, stanzas, elegies and other pieces of poetry, inserted and contained in a certain book, before or since a certain time printed and published under the name and title of the *Parnasse Satyrique* or other title, containing the said book and other poetical works of the said certain ones, as well as a number of blasphemies against God and His saints, and a number of sacrileges, impieties and

other abominations against the honor of God, His church, morals and public decency; and to those, male and female, who possessed knowledge as to when, and at what time, and in what place, the said book of the *Parnasse Satyrique* and other impious books of that sort had been printed, who had composed them, who had written or furnished the copies to make printings, who had revised them for the press; or who possessed knowledge that the said certain ones or certain malefactors, being advised of the criminal prosecution which had been launched against them, had fled from this city to escape and avoid certain execution of the decree of the Court of the month of August last, and that, nevertheless, these certain ones or some of them had said, recited and published in divers places, to divers persons, and in divers companies, any of the said sonnets, satires or other poems, or parts of poems, as being of their work and hand, and had uttered and proffered in divers places the said blasphemies and impieties therein contained, having likewise solicited, suborned and corrupted a number of youthful spirits to induce them to believe the same impieties and blasphemies, etc.”* But this admonition provoked only vague and ridiculous denunciations, which furnished no new charge against Théophile. The latter defended himself with great energy and ability, which gave men of letters the courage to defend him likewise, in a multitude of brochures in verse and in prose; while his enemies, especially the Jesuits, in turn distinguished themselves in this war of pens, which merely added venom to the quarrel and rendered the position of the accused more critical. He was still in prison awaiting sentence, when love of gain induced certain provincial publishers to reprint the satirical works which had given rise to these formidable proceedings. It was, undoubtedly, at Lyons and at Rouen that presses were found for reproducing surreptitiously the *Espadon Satyrique*, the *Cabinet Satyrique* and the *Parnasse Satyrique*; these pirated editions, badly printed upon terrible paper, were full of gross errors, and did not bear, along with the date of 1625, the name of any book-seller; the edition of the *Parnasse* had for title: *Le Parnasse Satyrique du Sieur de Théophile*, as though to furnish one weapon the more against the unfortunate poet, who was thus denounced again upon the title-page of the book attributed to him. Was this an atrocious perfidy on the part of a hidden enemy, or, rather, the shameful result of a book-seller’s speculation?

*Translator’s Note:—The French text quoted is not as clear as might be.

However this may be, the Théophile affair had been almost forgotten when the case was reviewed to the poet's advantage. "The affair, as usually happens, made a great stir by reason of its novelty," wrote Malherbe to Racan, in a letter of the 4th of November, 1625; "but since that time, it has barely been heard of. What gives me a still more unfavorable opinion of the whole proceedings is the character of the persons concerned in it (the Jesuits). For my part, I think I have already written you that I do not hold him guilty of anything, save of having done nothing which redounds to the trade with which he meddles. If he dies, you should have no fear; you will not be taken as one of his accomplices." This cruel persecution finally came to an end. Théophile, in the debates accompanying the rehearing of his case, confounded the witness who had deposed against him and overthrew most of the charges which at first had proved too much for him. Parliament revoked the sentence and was content with banishing him from the capital. Thus was inaugurated criminal legislation against bad books, those derogatory to manners and public decency. The poor Théophile died a few months later, as a result of his long and grievous captivity (the 25th of September, 1626). He had been restored to the King's good graces, and might have returned to Paris to his joyous friends; the latter were quite astonished at seeing him make so edifying a death, which did not, however, restrain the Jesuit Raynaud from insisting that the author of the *Parnasse Satyrique* had died in final impenitence (*nullis expiatus sacramentis*), and that he had gone straight to Hell (*abiit in locum suum*). Despite the precedent established by the trial of Théophile Viaud, Parliament passed over many books of the same sort as the *Parnasse Satyrique* before renewing the prosecution against authors and publishers of obscene poems; it did not even appear to take cognizance of the reprinting of satiric works which it formerly had prosecuted and condemned, and which now were in evidence on all sides. *La Muse Folâtre*, for example, which was quite equal to the *Parnasse Satyrique*, was reprinted every year in the most convenient format: *les Muses gaillardes*, *la Quintessence satyrique*, *le Dessert des Muses* and other similar anthologies were published in abundance, and did grave harm to morals by incessantly warming the germs of Prostitution; we do not get the impression from the judicial annals that poets or book-sellers were compromised by reason of such licentious publications, down to the time of Louis XIV's majority, when, in the interest of public morals, unusually

rigorous measures came to be employed against all sorts of corruption. Théophile had not been burned; Berthelot had not been hanged under Louis XIII; but a satirist, Louis Petit, guilty of having composed verses less abominable than those of the *Parnasse Satyrique*, perished at the stake in the middle of Louis XIV's century.

CHAPTER LXXXII

IT IS not a chapter, it is an entire book which ought to be devoted to the history of the theater and its relation to Prostitution. From its origin, the theater has exerted an unfortunate influence over manners, and even takes on, in certain periods of social depravity, the character of a true excitant to debauchery. In the first centuries of the Christian Church, the stage had reached the limit of indecency, and we find on every page in the writings of the Fathers a protest on the part of an indignant modesty against the abominable excesses of this school for scandal. We are compelled to admit that the horror inspired by the profane theater in the Christian philosophers was only too well justified by the abuses which had grown up in connection with the theatric art. Christianity having replaced the worship of the false gods, the theater did not long survive the latter's temples and idols, and for a number of centuries in France no other vestiges of the old comedy remained than the masquerades of Mardi Gras, the feast of the Lame King (*Roi-boit*) and of the Bean (*la Fève*), the saturnalia of the Feast of Fools and that of the Deacons, the "mysteries" and the "shows" (*montres*) of the religious processions and the entries of Kings, Queens, Princes, Princesses, Bishops, Abbots, etc., the dances and the songs of the mountebanks, and the "recitations" of the troubadours and the trouvères. If a few dramatic performances, in imitation of Terence and Plautus, took place in convents and in colleges, they escaped ecclesiastic anathema by putting on the cloak of literature and an extreme reserve; but these rare reminiscences of Latin comedy did not constitute a theatrical habit on the part of the nation, which possibly was unaware that any theater had existed prior to those crude and naïve theatrical sketches attempted by the Brothers of the Passion at the end of the fourteenth century.

The doctrine of the Church against spectacles was invariably upheld by the Fathers and by the Councils; it might be said that it had been justified by the odious orgies which marked the decline of the pagan theater. The capitularies and the ordinances of the Kings were conformable to the sentiment of the Catholic doctors regarding the theater and actors. The latter found themselves branded with infamy by the mere fact of their vile trade (*omnes infamiae maculis*

aspersi, id est histriones ut viles personae, non habeant potestatem accusandi, Capitulary 789). Respectable folk were commanded to keep their distance from these infamous ones, and ecclesiastics were never to defile their eyes and ears by listening to their obscene words or viewing their immodest gestures. (*Histrionum quoque turpium et obscenorum insolentias jocosum et ipsi animo effugere caeterisque effugienda praedicare debent*. See the *Capitul. des Rois de France*, Volume I, page 1170.) There were, however, always those who were willing to brave the excommunications of the clergy, and to accept the brand of infamy attached to their profession; for there were always, at the same time, voluptuaries and debauchees who were willing to pay any price for a forbidden pleasure. The *Histrionat*, or state of comedian, was, therefore, looked upon as a sort of Prostitution, and St. Thomas does not hesitate to put upon the same plane the courtesan who traffics in her body with every comer and the comedian who prostitutes himself in public, so to speak, by selling his grimaces and his licentious postures. The goods acquired in this manner impressed the learned casuist as being ill-acquired and dishonest ones, which ought to be restored to the poor (*quaedam vero dicuntur male acquisita, quia acquiruntur ex turpi causa, sicut de meretricio et histrionatu*. See the *Traité des jeux de théâtre* by P. Lebrun, Paris, Delaune, 1731, 12mo. page 193). That is why Philip-Augustus, imbued with the idea "that to give to actors was to give to the Devil," expelled the histrions from his court and forbade them to reappear there, applying to works of devotion and of charity the money which would have been spent upon supporting the scandalous debaucheries of the theater.

The theater did not achieve a legal existence in France until it came to assume the pious disguise under which it was presented to Chales VI. The manners of that period were already quite relaxed, as we have said, and the love of luxury had predisposed the minds of men to a passion to all in the way of sensual novelty. The *jeux* of the Brothers of the Passion, were, accordingly, received with a sort of furore, when they were given for the first time at the gates of Paris, in the village of Maur. It was about 1398 that a troupe of wandering comedians, who called themselves the Brothers of the Passion, for the reason that they presented that mystery in the form of scenic dialogues, began giving performances, to which the people came from all directions. These performances, mingled with prayers and canticles,

were, undoubtedly, very edifying, if we consider merely their object; but the Provost of Paris was afraid that they would lead to grave disorders, and by an order of the 30th of June, 1398, he forbade all the inhabitants of Paris, as well as those of Saint-Maur and other places subject to his jurisdiction, "to perform any games with characters taken either from the life of Jesus Christ, or from the lives of the saints or of other sorts, without the permission of the King, under pain of incurring his indignation and of forfeiture to him." These rigorous prohibitions show that the performances given at Saint-Maur were not unaccompanied by scandal, or, according to an opinion which does not contradict the preceding one, that there was an old law of Philip-Augustus or of St. Louis which had abolished the theater and put the profession of comedian under ban. However this may be, the performances were not repeated until 1602, when Charles VI manifested a desire to perform them and was so edified that he accorded to the Brothers of the Passion letters-patent authorizing them to perform their *mysteries* "whenever and as many times as they pleased." By virtue of these letters-patent, the Brothers established their theater near the Porte Saint-Denis, on the ground floor of the Hôpital de la Trinité in which pilgrims and poor travelers found asylum for the night, when they arrived there after the gates of the city had been closed. The Brothers had already founded, in the chapel of this *hôpital*, their Confraternity of the Passion and Resurrection of Our Lord. We believe it to be permissible deduction from the foundation of this confraternity that the first *joueurs*, or actors, who had appeared in the town of Saint-Maur merely had constituted themselves the *maîtres du jeu* and had recruited their confrères among the bourgeois and the tradespeople of the capital. From that moment, a taste for the theater spread with frenzy among the population, which came in a throng on Sundays and feast-days to the performances of the "mysteries" and "miracles," contributing in abundance to the expenses of the dramatic confraternity.

This curiosity and this enthusiasm were no longer of a devout nature, although the ostensible object of the spectacle was the edification of souls through the contemplation of holy things and the disposing of them to prayer. It is permissible to assume that, despite the religious character of the pieces performed, and notwithstanding the encouragement which the clergy accorded to these pious divertissements, the theater from then on served as an auxiliary to Prostitution.

Let us picture to ourselves, for example, what one of these performances must have been like, in a narrow and ill-lighted hall, where the spectators mingled in confusion, the majority of them standing, a few of them seated, but all crowded together and closely packed in, without distinction of age, sex or condition. The hall was 129 feet long by 36 feet wide; its height did not exceed, certainly, 15 or 20 feet; it was sustained by arches supporting the upper floor. From the total length it is necessary to subtract at least 15 feet for the stage; for, in addition to the platform on which the drama was played, there were, in the pit of the theater, a number of *établis*, or scaffoldings, containing the images of different places where the action took place and communicating with one another by stairs or ladders. Above, the "Paradise," in a sphere of clouds, stretched its blue pavilion, thickly dotted with stars; below, a dragon's mouth, incessantly moving, symbolized the jaws of Hell, from which came forth devils through jets of smoke and flame; in the center were a number of decoratively painted planes, planes to which the scene of the drama was transported when the action took place before Herod or Pilate. The audience thus had in view, at one time, the whole local setting of the piece, the action of which took place alternately, in Heaven, on earth and in Hell. This was not all; it was necessary, also, to have in full view, throughout the spectacle, all the actors who played the various parts, for the actors, arrayed in their costumes, were stationed on each side of the steps, where they awaited their cues, watching the rest of the piece like simple spectators; they would descend, each in his turn, into the theater and then ascend to their places once more, after having acted their parts. They were never out of sight, at least so long as their parts did not demand that they disappear into a small box, closed with curtains, representing a secret chamber, which served to conceal from the spectator certain delicate actions of the piece, such as the *accouchement* of Saint Anne, that of Saint Elizabeth, that of the Virgin, etc. This box or niche stimulated to the highest degree the imaginative faculties of the public. If the curtains were open, one waited the moment when they should be closed; if they were closed, one kept inquiring when they would be opened. The spectators did not fail to guess at all that was hidden from them for decency's sake, and they followed in thought the smuttiest implications of the action; hence the proverbial locution, referring to some scandalous thing that should not be exposed to glances it might offend, to the effect that it should remain "behind the curtain."

Precise documents are lacking to enable us to determine the indecencies and immoralities which, from earliest times, had accompanied the rebirth of the theater. But it is certain that these pious performances were a danger to morals. The "Mystery of the Passion" and the other dramatic compositions of the same sort, which were performed on certain Sundays and feast-days in the theater of la Trinité had, undoubtedly, no other object in view than that of arousing the religious sentiments of the spectators, and it may be granted that the author of this tremendous drama, which embraces the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, had accomplished a work of devotion under the form of literature, a work in which we are forced to recognize the presence of great beauty. This work, as a matter of fact, deserved being revised, and in part done over, as it was by Jean-Michel, Bishop of Mans, who lived in the fifteenth century. But inevitably, in accordance with the spirit of the theater of that age, a great many scenes of the "Mystery of the Passion" and similar mysteries entailed the commonplaces of obscenity, while the dialogue of the minor characters drew upon the popular speech for licentious images and smutty words. Frequently, also, the apostles and the saints themselves gave the impression of having lived in the society of lost women and the most ignoble debauchees. Amid a host of examples, we shall select one scene from the "Mysteries of St. Genevieve," in which we have a nun of Bourges, who, hearing of the miracles of the saint, had come to pay her a visit. St. Genevieve asks her what her condition is; the nun replies bravely that she is a virgin. "You!" cries the Saint with contempt:

*"Non pas vierge, non, mais ribaude,
Qui futes en avril si baude (debauchée),
Le tiers jours entre chien et loup,
Qu'au jardin Gaultier Chantelou,
Vous souffrites que son berchier
Vous deflorast sous un peschier!"**

But the poetic mysteries ordinarily disdained the primitive descrip-

*Translator's Note:—"You are ribald, not a maid,
And last April, in the shade
Of Gautier Chantelou's garden-plot,
You let his good lad touch the spot:
Like bitch or wolf, beneath a tree,
You gave him your virginity."

tions of narrative; they removed from the public gaze only certain scenes which would have been a little too lively and a little too crass to be performed outside the curtained niche. They carried the action to the point where the intelligence of the spectator might be counted upon to fill out the episode, the preludes to which had been offensive enough to a timid modesty. Even when the curtains had been drawn, the actor, by gesture and grimace, felt called upon to interpret what the poet had left under a transparent veil. In the *Vie et histoire de madame sainte Barbe*, which was performed and printed about 1520 (see the Catalogue of the *Bibl. Dram. de M. de Soleinne* by P.-L. Jacob, *Bibliophile*, Volume I, page 107), although the mystery begins with a sermon on a Text from the Gospel, the first scene opens in a bad house, where a light woman (*meretrix* is the printed word) sings a song and indulges in obscene gestures (*signa amoris illiciti*, remarks the editor, in the manner of a gloss). The Emperor (he is not otherwise named) orders this woman to persuade the saint to "commit fornication," and following is the manner in which the counsellor to debauchery sets about seducing Madame Barbe, who commends herself to God:

*"Je gaigne chascune journée:
Point je ne me suis sejournee (reposée),
Du jeu d'amour scay bien jouer . . .
A tous gallans fais bonne chere,
Et ainsi vous le devez faire.
Onc ne vy si belles mains,
Belles cuisses et si beaux rains,
Comme vous avez, par mon ame!
Nous deux gagnerons de l'argent,
Car vous avez ung beau corps gent."**

The authors of the mysteries treated in a highly profane manner the most sacred subject, but unlike the ancient theater, they never accorded a large place to unnatural love; they understood nothing of

**Translator's Note*:—"I gain each day, as the world knows,
What's due me; I take no repose
From sport of love which I play well. . . .
To every gallant I give good cheer,
And you should do the same, my dear.
For fairer hands were never seen,
Or better buttocks on a queen,
Than you possess, upon my soul!
And we should gain of silver store,
For you have a body men adore."

what we call passionate drama; they frequently expressed with crudity the desires of the flesh; they took pleasure in dealing brutally with lust, and only at times do they give us the effect of a pastoral idyll, filled with a vague inspiration, as in this charming dialogue between the two shepherds in the "Mystery of the Passion":

MELCHY

Les pastourelles chanteront.

ACHIN

Pastoureux guetteront oeillades.

MELCHY

*Les nymphes les escouteront,
Et les driades danseront
Avec les gentes Oreades.*

ACHIN

*Pan viendra faire ses gambades.
Revenant des Champs-Élysées,
Orpheus fera ses sonnades.
Lors Mercure dira ballades
Et chansons bien autorisées.*

MELCHY

*Bergères seront oppressées
Soudainement, sous les pastis . . . **

MELCHY

**Translator's Note:—Shepherd lasses, they shall sing.*

ACHIN

And shepherd lads cast glances shy.

MELCHY

*Nymphs shall listen to everything,
And the Dryads dance in ring,
With Oreads nearby.*

ACHIN

*Pan shall come to skip and play.
From the meadows of the blest,
Orpheus shall frame a lay;
Mercury a ballad gay,
With songs of tuneful zest.*

MELCHY

*Shepherdesses shall be soon oppressed
Beneath the . . .*

There were, in such cases, but rare excitations to love, such as might trouble a young heart, tender and naïve, without corrupting it or filling it with the poison of vice. The actors, through the transports of the *jeu*, rather than from a calculated personal perversity, frequently took it upon themselves to add to their rôles a licentious pantomime which the poet had not anticipated, but which the public encouraged with bursts of laughter and of applause. Thus, the band of devils, which was called the *diablerie*, was distinguished less by its hideous masks and strange accoutrements than by its indecent postures and disrespectable gestures. These devils, portrayed to us in the old manuscript miniatures, mural paintings and wood engravings, looking less frightful than ridiculous, frequently had the heads of monkeys or satyrs, with lolling tongues in place of the natural parts or in the form of breasts. Satan or Lucifer had a body wholly composed of these grotesque heads, heads with rolling provocative eyes, and which appeared to make use of their tongues as emblems of impurity. Moreover, the tails of certain demons affected obscene forms and proportions. These libidinous eccentricities were, undoubtedly, tolerated on the part of the devils, for the reason that, according to the belief of the Catholic Church, the spirit of evil is, above all, the agent of lubricity. Each performance took place under the surveillance of a sergeant, whose express business it was to watch over the acting and the policing of the hall, and to see that nothing took place there that was not decent and orderly. (See the Request addressed to the lieutenant of the Provost of Paris by the masters of the confraternity in 1403, in the *Variétés histor., phys., et littér.*, published by Boucher d'Argis, in 1752, Volume I, page 461.)

This surveillance was, undoubtedly, called for among both actors and spectators. The former, for example, followed no rule of art, but yielded to all the impulses of their imagination; each one dressed according to his fancy, endeavoring to think up whatever would cause him to stand out from his confrères and aid him to win the favor of the audience. From this desire to shine, this artistic emulation, resulted incredible blackguardisms and the most bizarre creations. The "devils," as we have said, indulged in serious outrages to modesty, which were charged to the account of the demon. But the angelic choir was not any more reserved, and the angels frequently displayed a singular forgetfulness of their silent rôle. Angels and devils were portrayed by supernumeraries, who sang canticles, recited prayers

and produced cries and groans at a given signal; their evolutions, their dances, their grimaces and their buffooneries, depended solely on the "inspiration" (*ingenium*) of each player. Sometimes a cherub, upon regaining his stall, would draw up his long white robe and reveal the fact that he had removed his breeches (*grèques*) so that he might not be recognized as the master bonnet-maker or journeyman *baudroyeur* of the rue Saint-Denis; sometimes, another one of the blessed, clad in a priest's chasuble, in falling through a trap, would remain suspended, heels over head, until someone would come to deliver him and restore a bit of order to his toilet. These burlesque episodes are indicated in the script of some of these *jeux*. Moreover, there was no woman among the *joueurs*; the feminine rôles were entrusted to young lads who were the best fitted for them by physique, and who could best imitate feminine wiles. There was here a particular attraction for vile debauchees, who were not lacking in interest in these handsome *garçonnets*, and who, in addition to admiring them in the theater, probably sought to meet them off stage. We may, therefore, suppose that, in spite of the watch kept by the sergeant, the policing of manners was not, and could not have been, effective in the interior of the hall, in the parquet, where no one was seated, and where the spectators formed a compact and impenetrable mass, or in the passageways and on the staircases, which were not always deserted and silent during the performance, and which were not lighted until the end of the sixteenth century. A rule of the civil lieutenant concerning the theater of the hôtel de Bourgogne, under date of the 12th of November, 1609 (see the *Traité de la Police* by Delamare, Volume I, page 472), orders that "the said theater shall be required to have a light by lantern or otherwise, not only in the parquet and galleries, but also above the doors at the exit, the whole under pain of a fine of 100 crowns and exemplary punishment. We call upon the commissioner of police to give his attention to this, and to make a report to us of any infractions." Despite this rule, and others of a similar nature which may have preceded it, we know, from a book printed in the time of Louis XIV, that the lighting of the staircases and corridors was so neglected at this period that these dark places served as the scene of gallant encounters during the performance. For the author whom we cite, without being able to recall the title of his work, complains of the fact that, upon arriving late at a comedy, once a performance had begun, a decent woman ran the risk

falling over, in the darkness, an amorous couple who barred the passage. As to the interior of the hall, it was lighted only by two or three smoky lanterns, suspended by cords above the parquet, and by a row of great tallow candles in front of the stage, the light from which grew dim when the candle-snuffer was not actively engaged in his employment. We shall not expatiate at any greater length upon the acts of debauchery which were committed, especially in the parquet, during the performances; suffice it to say that this daily scandal, which furnish no little food for scandal to the enemies of the theater, continued until Voltaire had succeeded in causing the spectators in the parquet to be seated. The Abbot of Latour, in his *Réflexions morales, politiques, historiques et littéraires sur le théâtre*, still complains, in 1772 (see Book IX, Volume V, page 6, of this collection), of the debauchery in the parquet; nevertheless, the theater might have escaped the excommunication of the church, the remonstrances of parliament and the vindictiveness of police magistrates, had it preserved the exclusively religious character which had led to its reëstablishment under Charles VI, but by the time dramatic confraternities, similar to those of the Passion, had been established in the provinces, and had undertaken also the performance of "mysteries" and of "miracles," with the aid of the masters and journeymen of the corporations, the younger folk had grown tired of an edifying spectacle which resembled a dramatized sermon; the old Gallic sense of humor was no longer content with these pious performances, even though there was in them frequent occasion for laughter; and so it was, comedy came to be born in France. Joyous confraternities, which called themselves *les Enfants-sans-souci* and *les Clercs de la Bazoche*, were founded in Paris and played farces, or *sotties* (which did not demand the theatrical pomp of the "mysteries," and which called for only a small number of good comedians). This new facetious theater was conducted at first in the open air, upon the fields of the fair and in the halls and at the street-corners of the city. Two or three mountebanks upon trestles, laden with tinsel fripperies and with their faces blackened or smeared with flour, would engage in a sprightly but smutty dialogue, portraying popular scenes, the subject of which was almost invariably love and marriage. These portrayals, indecent enough in themselves were marvelously adapted to still more indecent improvisations. Later, these improvisations were succeeded by pieces written in verse, or rather in rhymed lines, which did not prevent the

actor from improvising still, and which still left opportunity for his licentious pantomime. This was enough to deprive the Brothers of the Passion of the majority of their spectators and to render their performances less remunerative. It was in vain that the Brothers endeavored to compete with their redoubtable rivals, by interpolating in the mysteries certain burlesque episodes, certain clownish characters, which lent a little relief to the gravity and majesty of the subject; it availed nothing; the players of the farces were always better received than the Brothers of the hôpital de la Trinité, and the amusement-seeking public took sides with them when they were persecuted by the Provost of Paris, who attempted to oppose the permanent installation of their theater. It was already too late to suppress a species of spectacle which was so well adapted to the French mind; nothing could be done except to prescribe regulations for it and in accordance with the privilege granted by Charles VI to the Brothers of the Passion. As a consequence the Brothers signed with the Enfants-sans-souci a treaty of alliance, by the terms of which they were to exploit, together and upon the same stage, the two dramatic genres, which shared the as yet restricted domain of theatric art. It was agreed between the two rival troupes that each should set off the other, and that they should play, in turn, farces and mysteries in order to vary their performances. The people, who seem to have been called upon to witness the signing of the contract, displayed a nice appreciation of its importance so far as their pleasures were concerned, and proceeded to designate under the name of *jeu des pois pilés* this association of the most disparate genres, of the sacred and the profane, of the tragic and the comic, the edifying and the scandalous. This expression, of *pois pilés* ("pounded peas"), which signifies a mixture or potpourri, contains an evident allusion to some farce, once very well known, in which a wag (*badin*) was represented as pounding dried peas and mixing them with lupine peas, which are bitter, and chick-peas, which are valuable as medicine.

The Paris theater, which was, if one may make use of the expression, the head of all the theaters in France, continued to be conducted in this manner down to the middle of the sixteenth century; it had two distinct troupes, that of the Brothers of the Passion and that of the Enfants-sans-souci, who played simultaneously or alternately. The performances took place between the mass and vespers on a Sunday, that is to say, from noon to about four o'clock; and since it would have

been impossible in this interval of time to portray a mystery which had sometimes thirty acts, 40,000 verses and two or three hundred actors, the players limited themselves to extracting a few scenes, or it may be, an entire act, which, accompanied by a farce or an harangue, composed the spectacle. Under rare circumstances, especially in the provinces, a complete mystery would be given, and then the performance would last for a number of days. It then took place no longer in a closed hall, but in the ruins of a Roman amphitheatre, as at Douai, in an open theater reared in the public square, or on a vast plain. Upon these solemn occasions, all the inhabitants of the city, of a country (*pays*) or of a *généralité* would share the common expense, furnishing alms, food, arms and habits, with the right of assisting at the *jeu* and the *montre* which always constituted the prelude. It will be sufficient to observe how Prostitution was favored by these "plenary courts" (*cours plénières*) of the people, which inspired so many diverse passions, so many vanities, so many desires and so many seductions. The playing of a great mystery would, inevitably, occasion numberless orgies and disorders of all sorts. But in Paris, at least, the weekly performance of the Brothers of the Passion and the Enfants-sans-souci, although equally dangerous to morals, could not give rise to such excesses; they, rather, acted slowly upon the public, imperceptibly impairing the purity of souls by constantly stirring up the dregs of social life. And yet, the theater, however obscene, however scandalous, however corrupt it may have been, does not appear to have incurred at Paris the animadversion or the reprimands of the civil or ecclesiastical authorities before the reign of Louis XI. We have stated elsewhere that, about 1512, the Enfants-sans-souci were threatened with expulsion and were obliged to suspend their performances until their confrère, Clément Marot, had restored them to the king's favor. We do not know what led to this disgrace, but it is probable that it was not a question of morals, but rather that the audacious farceurs had permitted themselves, in the manner of the clerics de la Bazoche, a few satirical quips relative to the king, his political policy or Queen Anne of Brittany. It was, undoubtedly, on this occasion that Louis XII remarked his purpose of seeing to it that the honor of ladies was respected, indicating that he would give good cause for repentance to any who offended that honor. It is altogether likely that the grievances which were alleged at this time for the closing of the theater of the Enfants-sans-souci were the origin of a

custom which continued throughout the sixteenth century, and which has come down to our day: the *maîtres du jeu* came to be required to depose with the office of the Provost of Paris the manuscript of the pieces which they desired to play, and to obtain from the Provost or from his lieutenant preliminary permission for the performance of the piece. Frequently, it is true, authors and actors refused to bow to this servitude, and many smutty farces, which were looked upon as impromptu, thus escaped the examination of the censors who had not authorized them; the civil lieutenant, in his regulations of the 12th of November, 1609, repeated his prohibition against performing "any comedies or farces, which they (the comedians) have not communicated to the King's Procurator, the record of which has not been signed by us." We cannot believe that the prologues of Bruscambille, the harangues of Tabarin or the songs of Gauthier-Garguille had been subjected in this manner to the King's Procurator and given his approbation.

We have already spoken of the debauched lives of the comedians and of all the young libertines who embraced this none too honorable profession in order to be able to indulge the more easily in debauchery, misdemeanors and vagabondage. We have seen that the poets, following the example of Villon and of Clément Marot, had an irresistible bent for the theater. It may be surmised that devotion and religious enthusiasm were no longer, as in the early days, the bond and attraction of the Brothers of the Passion. The Church, nevertheless, had not yet branded these latter with its anathema, whatever may have been the depravity of their manners and the scandal of their private conduct. The theologians, in their dogmatic writings, stated clearly that churchmen could not, without breaking the canonical laws, give the sacrament of the Eucharist to actors, who were always in a state of mortal sin (see the *Traité hist. et dogmat. des jeux de théâtre* of Père Lebrun, page 202); and the famous casuist, Gabriel Biel, who examined into this case of conscience at the end of the fifteenth century, at the very moment when the Confraternity of the Passion was being established, includes the theatrical art among those which are accursed and forbidden. The statutes of the University of Paris ordained that comedians should be relegated beyond the *ponts* and that they should never come to dwell within the quarter of the schools, so dangerous to morality were their performances held to be (*Ludi . . . quibus lascivia, petulantia, procacitas excitetur*, statutes 29 and 35). Nevertheless, the

edict of the Church against comedians was never enforced in any general and rigorous manner, the comedians being commonly interred in holy ground; witness the tombs and epitaphs of a few of them, to be viewed in Parisian parishes. As to the comediennes, they were no more subject to excommunication than their male companions, when they began to appear upon the stage and to be seen without masks, during the reign of Henri III or that of Henri IV. These female players, were, however, no more than the concubines of the comedians, and they led, like the latter, so dissolute a life that, to make use of the expression of Tallement des Réaux, they served as "common wives" (*femmes communes*) to the whole dramatic troupe. They had always been a part of the association of nomadic or stationary actors; but the public had not made their acquaintance, and their more or less indecent characteristics had remained hidden behind the veil of the theater; as soon as they had come to take feminine parts, which always had been played by men, their presence upon the stage was looked upon as an odious prostitution of their sex.

These first comediennes were regarded with much disfavor by the public, which barely tolerated them in their new rôles, which were considered unnatural. It is our opinion that it was the example of the Italian and Spanish troupes which led to the appearance of women upon the French stage. The Italian troupe was summoned from Venice to Paris by Henri III. The Spanish troupe did not arrive there until the time of Henri IV. These two troupes created much disorder, and the same might be said of the comediennes, who added, through the immodesty of their acting and their toilets, one more scandalous attraction to the performances. "On Sunday, the 9th of May, 1577," says P. de l'Estoile, "the Italian comedians, nicknamed *i Gelosi*, began to play their Italian comedies in the hall of the hôtel de Bourbon at Paris; they took as salary 4 sous a head from all the French who desired to go see them play, and there was there such a concourse of people that the four best preachers of Paris could not have gathered so many together when they were preaching." We have reported above the special charm which these performances had for libertines, who went there especially to admire "*ces bonnes dames*," whose breasts, entirely uncovered, rose and fell "by compass or measure like a clock." Parliament felt that it was time to put an end to these immodest exhibitions, and six weeks after the opening of the theater of the *Gelosi*, it forbade the latter to play their comedies under pain of a

fine of 10,000 Parisian pounds, applicable to the poor box (*boîte des pauvres*); but these Italians did not regard themselves as beaten, and on Saturday, the 27th of July, they reopened their theater in the hôtel de Bourbon, "as before," l'Estoile tells us, "by the permission and express justice of the king, the corruption of these times being such that the farceurs, buffoons, whores and mignons have all the credit." As to the Spanish actors, they were established, in 1604, at the fair of Saint-Germain, and their stay at Paris was marked by the punishment of two of them, whom the bailiff of Saint-Germain caused to be broken upon the wheel alive, as being guilty of the murder of a comedienne,—their comrade, whom they had slain with a dagger and cast into the Seine. This beautiful Spanish girl, aged twenty-two years or thereabouts, as l'Estoile tells us, "had had for a long time private and familiar relations" with these two men, who slew her undoubtedly out of revenge, rather than for purposes of theft. Such is, in our opinion, the origin of comediennes upon the French stage. It would be impossible to say who was the first one thus to expose herself to the public gaze. We find the name of the *femme* Dufresne, written in hand upon a copy of the *Union d'amour et de chasteté*, a pastoral in five acts and in verse, the work of A. Gautier, a provincial apothecary. This piece, printed at Poitiers in 1606, was certainly played about this time. (See the *Biblioth. dram.* of M. de Soleinne, Volume I, page 189.) In a copy of another theatrical piece of the same period, the *Tragédie de Jeanne d'Arques, dite la Pucelle d'Orléans*, printed at Rouen by Raphael du Pettit-Val in 1603, we find the names of two actresses, written in hand: the editor of the Catalogue of the dramatic Library of M. de Soleinne (*Supplem. au tome I*, page 30) has read these names as V. Froneuphe and Marthon Plus. We are led to believe that the proper reading is Fanuche, which was the name of a famous courtesan with whom Henri IV had an affair. (See above, Chapter XXXIII.) Finally, the Abbot of Marolles, in his *Mémoires* (Volume I, page 59 of the 12 mo. edition, published in 1755), cites with praise an actor of the hôtel de Bourgogne, who played women's rôles in 1616, under the name of Perinne, along with Gautier Garguille; he speaks also of "that famous comedienne named Laporte (Marie Dernier), who was still upon the stage and who was the admiration of all, along with Valleran."

It may be asserted that women had never figured in the "mysteries;" and accordingly the prohibition of this variety of spectacle is not

to be attributed to any scandal which their presence might have caused. It was in 1540 that Parliament deemed it necessary to intervene for the first time in matters of the theater, but it is certain that its intervention had been needed for a long time in the interest of manners. Parliament began by restoring the hôpital de la Trinité to its former use and by dislodging from it the Brothers of the Passion, who transferred the seat of their confraternity to the headquarters of the Jacobins in the rue Saint-Jacques and their theater to the hôtel de Flandres. The theater was installed at great expense in this large house, situated between the rues Platrière, Coq-Heron, Coquillière and des Vieux-Augustins; but following the first performance of a new "mystery," that of the "Old Testament," played at the end of the year 1541, Parliament ordered the closing of the theater for reasons set forth in the decree: "1. Since, to entertain the people there are commonly mingled with sports of this sort, farces or derisory comedies, which are things forbidden by the holy canons; 2. Since the authors of these pieces play for gain and are, therefore, to be looked upon as actors, *joculateurs* or mountebanks; 3. Since the throngs at these sports are an occasion for adultery and fornication; 4. Since all this calls for an expenditure of money which is improper to the goodmen and to the artisans of the city." (*Disc. sur la comédie ou Traité histor. et dogm. des jeux du théâtre* by P. Pierre Lebrun, Paris, veuve Delaulee, 1731, page 214.) The Brothers of the Passion desired to regain their privileges, granted by Charles VI and confirmed upon a number of occasions by the kings who were his successors; they, therefore, addressed a request to Parliament and a supplication to the king, setting forth that, from time immemorial, they had played their mysteries "to the popular edification, without general or particular offense." The king gave orders, and Parliament confirmed his decision by a decree, under date of the 27th of January, 1541 (1542, new style). The Court, following the letters-patent of the king, which permitted Charles Leroyer and his consorts, masters and entrepreneurs of the play and mystery of the Old Testament, to represent this mystery, granted the Brothers of the Passion the same permission, "with the charge that they were to use it well, without employing any frauds, nor interpolating profane, lascivious or ridiculous things." It is further stated in this decree "that for entrance to the theaters, they (the *maîtres du jeu*) shall not take more than 2 sous from each person, and for the rent of each *loge* during the said mystery, but 30 crowns;

nor shall they perform except on feast-days which are not solemn; they shall commence at one o'clock of the afternoon and end at five, and shall see to it that no scandal or tumult ensues; and inasmuch as the people thereby will be distracted from divine service and alms will be diminished, they shall give to the poor the sum of 1,000 crowns, unless a greater sum be ordained." We have here, it has been said, the initial application of the *droit des pauvres* (right of the poor), which was applied at first to the profit of the poor orphans.

Parliament had already become aware of the inconveniences attending the mysteries and the obscenity of the accompanying farces; the "Mystery of the Passion," retouched and corrected by Arnoul Greben, still contained more than one intolerable passage (see the *Hist. de Paris*, of Dulaure, 12mo. edition, Volume III, page 501); the "Mystery of the Old Testament" (*Mystère de l'ancien Testament*), the first to be performed and printed, contained scenes which outraged manners no less than religion. The king, therefore, suddenly ordered the demolition of the hôtel de Flandres, and the Brothers of the Passion found themselves once more without an asylum; an attempt was probably being made to force them to close their theater. They purchased the old hôtel de Bourgogne, in the rue Mauconseil, and they there built a new theater; but when they undertook to resume their performances, Parliament, petitioned for a confirmation of their privileges, expressly forbade them, by decree of the 17th of November, 1548, "to play the mysteries of the Passion of Our Lord or other sacred mysteries, under pain of an arbitrary fine, permitting them, however, to play other mysteries, profane, honest and licit, without offending and injuring any person." The mysteries had had their day; a few of them were reprinted, but they were no longer played except in the provinces. Parliament, which had forbidden them, was merely conforming to the taste of the public, whom this species of spectacle left cold or indignant. Tragedy and comedy shared the succession to the mysteries, but the favorite genre of the sixteenth century, one which honest folk reproved, but which Parliament did not dare forbid, was the farce of the Enfants-sans-souci, that licentious and clownish comedy which dramatized the vices and the humor of the people. "The farces," says Louis Guyon, in the *Diverses leçons* (Lyons, Ant. Chard, 1625, 3 volumes, octavo), "differed in nothing from the comedies, save that they introduced interlocutors who represented small folk, and who by their gestures taught the people to laugh, and among others, there were

introduced one or two who counterfeited the fools called *Zanis** and *Pantaloons*, having false faces very counterfeit and ridiculous: in France, they were called *badins* and clad in the same habits. Commonly, the matter had to do only with the tricks which these knaves performed, for their suppers, on poor idiots and the ill-advised who lightly let themselves be deceived and persuaded; or there were introduced luxurious and voluptuous persons who deceived a few married dunces and idiots to abuse their wives, or very often, wives who invented the means of enjoying the fires of love without anyone's being the wiser. . . . As to the farces, often as not they were full of all sorts of obscenities, villainies and gluttonies, and gestures little honest, teaching people how one might deceive the wife of another, and servants and servant-maids their masters, and other similar things, which are reprov'd by wise folk and which are not found good." Nevertheless, the farces, the great majority of which remained unpublished, and which have followed the old actors to the grave, continued to occupy the boards down to the reign of Louis XIV, when some of the most celebrated among them were transformed into comedies.

Following the suppression of the Mysteries, the theater, in place of being purified and tending toward a moral end, abandoned itself to a license well calculated to justify the bitter complaints of its enemies; it appeared to have no other object than that of corrupting youth and teaching debauchery. Following are the terms in which a zealous Catholic denounced it, in 1588, to the horror of good citizens and the chastisement of magistrates, in his *Remonstrances très-humbles au roy de France, et de Pologne Henry troisieme de ce nom, sur les désordres et misères du royaume*. "In that sewer and house of Satan known as the *Hostel de Bourgogne*, the actors of which falsely call themselves the 'Brothers of the Passion of Jesus Christ,' there are no end of scandalous assignations, to the prejudice of the decency and modesty of women, and to the ruin of the families of poor artisans, with which the lower hall (the *parquet*) is filled, which persons, for more than two hours before the play, spend their time in immodest conversations, card and dice games, in gluttony and drunkenness, quite publicly, from which come many quarrels and blows. . . . Upon the scaffold (the stage), there are erected altars laden with crosses and ecclesiastical ornaments; there are represented there priests clad in surplices,

*Translator's Note:—Our *Zany*.

even in immodest farces, for the purpose of performing a ridiculous marriage . . . and, moreover, there is not a farce which is not foul, dirty and villainous, to the scandal of the young who are present."

The sixteenth century farces were the shame of our French theater and sadly encouraged social demoralization; but we would know of them only by hearsay, if two recent publications had not given us nearly a hundred and fifty of them, which have thus escaped a systematic destruction. "One could not say," wrote Antoine du Verdier, Sieur de Vauprivas, in his *Bibliothèque françoise*, printed at Lyons in 1584, "it would be hard to say how many farces were composed and printed, so great is their number; for in the past, everybody took a hand at making them, and even the actors called Enfants-sans-souci played and recited them. Now a farce is but an act of a comedy, and the shortest is looked upon as the best, in order to avoid the boredom which prolixity and length bring to the spectators." Du Verdier adds that, according to the *Art de Rhetorique* of Gratian du Pont, the farce, or *sottise*, must not exceed five hundred verses. In addition to the farce, properly so-called, there were, also, merry dialogues with two characters, monologues and facetious sermons, which a single comedian recited. Despite the multitude of farces which have existed, a score, at most, have been preserved; for the ecclesiastics and devout persons saw to it that all the copies of these obscene compositions were destroyed; one cannot explain, otherwise, why so many printed farces, in many successive editions, should have disappeared without leaving any traces. There was discovered a few years ago, in an old library in Germany, a collection of sixty-four farces, dialogues, monologues and "merry sermons" printed, the majority of them, at Lyons, about 1545; the British Museum of London has recently acquired this unique collection, in which are to be found only six or seven pieces already known in various editions. It is this collection of farces which M. Viollet-le-Duc recently published under the title of *Ancien Théâtre François* (Paris, P. Jannet, 1854, three volumes, in-18). Previously, M. Francisque-Michel had published (Paris, Techener, 1831-37, four volumes, octavo), after a manuscript in the possession of the Duke of la Vallière (see the *Catalogue* of his books, No. 3304), which is now in the Imperial Library, seventy-four farces of the same period, which are certainly printed for the first time, the former editions having been wiped out like so many others. These two collections, so precious for the historian of the old theater, show us what need public

modesty had to groan at the farces, where the acting always exaggerated the indecency of subject and dialogue.

The implacable warfare waged on printed farces had already succeeded in rendering them sufficiently rare, along about the beginning of the seventeenth century, to render it necessary for a bibliophile, who was a connoisseur in this species of waggish literature, to save a few of them from destruction by printing, in the year 1612, through Nicolas Rousset, book-seller of Paris, a *Recueil de plusieurs farces tant anciennes que modernes, lesquelles ont esté mises en meilleur ordre et langage qu'auparavant*. The authors of the *Bibliothèque du Théâtre François* (the Duke of la Vallière, Marin and Mercier de Saint-Léger) have analyzed the seven farces contained in this curious collection, in a manner to prove that the theater of that time showed no respect for the audience, which pardoned the greatest filth, provided it found an excuse to laugh. One of these farces, which La Fontaine has imitated in his tale of the *Faiseur d'oreilles*, shows us a pregnant woman, who inquires of a physician whether she is to have a boy or a girl. The physician looks into her hand and tells her that the child will have no nose. The woman is in despair, but the physician consoles her, and promises to repair the evil; with this object in view, he retires with her. The wife rejoins her husband, who is waiting at the door, and is brought to bed a moment after. "How is this," demands the husband, "it has been thirteen months since I have approached you, and you are giving birth to a child, whereas in the first year of our marriage you were brought to bed at the end of six months!" . . . "It is because," she replies, "the first time the child was placed too near the outlet and the second time too far up." It was nothing to represent the *accouchement* of a woman upon the stage; frequently lovers were to be seen going to bed and playing their parts between the sheets! Frequently also, the action took place behind the scenes or in the niche enclosed with curtains; but in order to avoid any misunderstanding, the spectator was advised of all that he was not permitted to see. In the *Farce joyeuse et recreative d'une femme qui demande les arrérages à son mari*, the wedded pair, who have had a lawsuit over this chapter in their matrimonial history, end by agreeing and coming out together. A neighbor, who has been employed to reconcile the two parties, then says:

*"Ils s'en sont allés là derriere,
Pensez, cheviller leur accord,*

*Afin qu'il en tienne plus fort.
C'est ainsi qu'il faut apaiser
Les femmes, quand veulent noiser.*"*

In the *Farce nouvelle, contenant le debat d'un jeune moine et d'un vieil gendarme, par-devant le dieu Cupidon, pour une fille* (New Farce, Containing the Debate of a Young Monk and an old Gendarme, in the Presence of the God Cupid, over a Girl), this girl comes to lay her case before Cupid's throne. She feels agitated by desires and amorous needs; Cupid counsels her to take a lover rather than a husband, and promises to provide her with the best there is. A young monk and an old gendarme dispute the possession of the girl, and Cupid, to put them all in good humor, invites them to join in singing a song; they excuse themselves, one after another, from the honor of this musical challenge, but the motives for their refusal are merely coarse puns. The two contestants decline to try out their voices, whereupon Cupid proposes to test the capacity of each one; but the god of love has recourse to indications less deceptive, and he gives the girl to understand that a *young* monk is worth more than an *old* gendarme.

It would be necessary to quote all the farces which have come down to us from the sixteenth century, in order to convey a thorough-going idea of their immorality and the part they played in the teaching of Prostitution. A good woman, after having been present at these immodest performances, would carry away with her a soul defiled and a mind turned to lust. Not only did the most obscene images, the crudest words, the most shameful maxims garnish the dialogue of the farceurs, but their pantomime and their actions on the stage were, likewise, horrible provocations to debauchery. It would be impossible to form any idea of the popular farces of the time without reading a few of them. The *Bibliothèque du Théâtre François* by the Duke de la Vallière, Marin and Mercier de Saint-Léger, the *Histoire de Théâtre François* by the brothers Parfaict, and the *Histoire Universelle des Théâtres*, published by an association of men of letters, give a detailed analysis of a number of these licentious pieces; but the reader who desires to study more accurately the origins of our dramatic literature should have recourse to the precious collection of farces which M. P.

**Translator's Note*:—They, my friends, have gone behind,
As you may guess, to peg their mind,
So that it will the better hold.
For that's the only way to deal
With women when they that way feel.

Jannet has just reprinted in his *Bibliothèque Elzevirienne*, under the title of *Ancien Théâtre François*. We shall remark, especially, among the seventy-four farces, histories, moralities, debates, monologues, dialogues and "merry sermons" which compose this collection, the *farce de frère Guillebert* which the original editor describes as "very good and right merry." It is, as a matter of fact, really comic, and we may well imagine the success and foolish laughter which it met with upon its performance; it is the freest of those which have come down to us. It begins with one of those merry sermons which frequently constituted the interlude or entr'acte of a tragedy or serious comedy.

Such was the popular theater down to the beginning of the sixteenth century; we have desired to show, through an analysis of the celebrated farces of the period, the sorry influence which they must have exercised upon morals. Farces of this sort were innumerable, as Du Verdier tells us; they were played throughout France, in the smallest villages; they served as a subject for the most indecent pantomime: they defiled, at once, the eyes and ears of the spectators, who, by their applause and their outbursts of senseless laughter, would encourage the actors in their immodest conduct. We can understand why the Catholic clergy had condemned with indignation this deplorable abuse of the theatric art, and we are no longer astonished, in view of such ordures, that the entire theater should have found itself included in that anathema with which the Church had branded farceurs and comedians. St. Francis of Sales, who composed about this time his writings on morality, compared the theatric performances to mushrooms, the best of which are not healthy. And yet, the civil authorities, whose business it was to watch over the policing of manners, do not appear to have been moved by the incredible license of the French theater before the end of Louis XIII's reign; up to that time, the Civil Lieutenant, in a few decrees relative to comedians, had enjoined the latter not to perform any but "licit and honest pieces, which offend no one;" but the commissioners and sergeants do not appear to have executed these decrees in a satisfactory manner. On the other hand, repression was very prompt and very severe where personal satires directed at persons of quality and notable individuals were concerned. Comedians who permitted themselves the least lack of respect towards persons or personal secrets were imprisoned, at that time, without process of law. As to farces which were merely smutty or ignoble, they were given free rein, and no one appears to have been scandalized by

them, especially in view of the fact that these indecent spectacles so delighted the people, who found in them a representation of their own coarse manners, the faithful expression of their own low sentiments, and a replica of their own colloquial speech.

We have already stated that the majority of the farces were not printed, and that those which were printed have disappeared for the most part. There are still enough in the collection of the British Museum at London and the Imperial Library at Paris to give us an accurate idea of the excessive depravity which alone could account for the tolerance shown these disgusting pieces. Following are the titles of a few of them, which will be found to contain all that their preambles promise: "New farce, very good and right merry of women who demand arrears of their husbands and oblige them by a *nisi*; for four persons, namely, the husband, the lady, the chambermaid and the neighbor.—A new farce and very joyous, of women who have their cauldrons mended, but forbid putting a piece over the hole, for three persons, namely, the first wife, the second and the *maignen*.—Farce very good and very joyous of Jeninot, who made a king of his cat, from fault of other companion, by crying: 'The king is lame!' and who mounted his mistress to lead her to mass; for three persons, etc." Such were the titles which gave a foretaste of the pieces thus advertised to the public, pieces which enjoyed an extraordinary vogue. These farces were learned by heart, and each person was capable at need of taking a part in them, when professional *joueurs* were lacking; a confraternity of apprentices, a trade corporation, or a social organization constituted a dramatic troupe. The associations of bourgeois or artisan actors multiplied in all parts of the realm in the first half of the sixteenth century, and Prostitution, which was always the motive behind this unbridled passion for the theater, was propagated in proportion to the number of comedians and comediennes, who lived in the midst of the filthiest excesses.

"There were two troupes then at Paris," relates Tallemant des Réaux, who is speaking of what he had learned from his contemporaries (Volume X of the 12mo. edition, page 40); "they were almost all sharpers, and their wives lived in the greatest license imaginable; the latter were wives in common, even to comedians of another troupe than the one to which they belonged." Tallemant des Réaux adds, further on: "Comedy was not in honor until after the Cardinal of Richelieu had taken it up (about 1625); before that respectable women

did not attend it." The three cleverest farceurs of the time, known, under their theatrical names, as Turlupin, Gaultier Garguille and Gros-Guillaume, played without women and carried their burlesque to the point of the most shameless cynicism; Tallemant des Réaux tells us, however, that Gaultier Garguille was "the first to begin to live a little more orderly than the others," and that Turlupin, "improving upon Gaultier Garguille's modesty, furnished a room properly; for all the others were scattered here and there and had neither hearth nor home." Sauval, who wrote his *Histoire des Antiquités de Paris* at the same time that Tallemant was writing his *Histoires*, is careful not to approve the manners of these three famous buffoons; he even says of Gaultier Garguille that "he never loved except in low places;" and the epitaph composed for the three friends, interred together in the church of Saint-Sauveur, contains what well may have been an allusion to the immorality that was the bond between them:

*Gaultier, Guillaume et Turlupin,
Ignorans en grec et latin,
Brillèrent tous trois sur la scène
Sans recourir au sexe féminin,
Qu'ils disoient un peu trop malin:
Faisant oublier toute peine,
Leur jeu de théâtre badin
Dissipoit le plus fort chagrin.
Mais la Mort, en une semaine,
Pour venger son sexe mutin,
Fit à tous trois trouver leur fin.**

Gros-Guillaume ("Big William") played with his face uncovered; but his two friends were always masked; each of them had a characteristic costume, which he never changed in the course of the farce. Before being incorporated in the troupe of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, they

**Translator's Note:—Gautier, Guillaume, Turlupin cant,
Of Greek and Latin ignorant,
Most brilliantly upon the stage;
No women them their aid do grant;
The sex with evil is rampant;
But they, in their theatrical rage,
Most cleverly, indeed, enchant;
Dull care with them is not extant.
Till Death, in one week, ends the page;
Avenging their sex dissonant,
She draws a curtain adamant.*

had set up their trestles in a tennis-court, which was not sufficient to hold all the curious ones attracted to these performances. The Cardinal of Richelieu desired to see and hear; he was fascinated with them, and deemed them worthy of becoming comedians of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, whither they proceeded to betake themselves with their farces and their songs. It may be supposed that these farces were the compositions of Turlupin* and Gros-Guillaume, since the name of *Turlupinades* has remained attached to these facetious pieces, which they played with abundant gestures and in impromptu fashion, in the manner of the Italian farces. We know, however, that the songs which our three friends so pleasingly rendered were the work of Gaultier Garguille, who himself had them printed in 1632 (Paris, Targa, little 12mo.), and who obtained for this purpose, under his own name, a privilege from the King, granted, it was stated, "to our dear and well-beloved Hugues Gueru, called Fléchelles, one of our ordinary comedians, from fear that counterfeiterers may add a few other songs more dissolute." The *Chanson de Gaultier Garguille*, however dissolute it may have been in essence, had passed into a proverb, and many folk, Sauval tells us, only went to the Hôtel de Bourgogne in order to hear it. As to the farces in which Turlupin (Henri Legrand was his family name) distinguished himself "by encounters full of wit, of fire and of judgment," they are known only by scenes reproduced in the old prints of Mariette and of Abraham Bosse. Moreover, these illustrious farceurs had tried their luck, and with success, in heroic comedy, which sometimes descended to the trivialities of farce.

The Hôtel de Bourgogne, where the farces, properly so-called, were performed down to the middle of the seventeenth century, possessed, at the beginning of that century, a comedian-author not less famous than Turlupin, Gaultier Garguille, Gros-Guillaume and Guillot-Gorju were later to become. He was a native of Champagne, named Deslauriers, who had taken the pseudonym of Bruscombille, under which he composed and published the *Plaisantes Imaginations*, which he performed upon the stage, by way of holding the attention of the audience between two pieces and preparing them to give a good reception to the farce which was to come. The employment of these comic and smutty interludes dating back, assuredly, to the *pois pilés* and the *badin*, who recited in public a "monologue" or a "merry sermon,"

*Translator's Note:—Turlupin is the Rabelaisian *Tirelupin*, which the Urquhart and Motteux version paraphrases as "new start-up grub."

spared neither grimaces nor indecent gestures, in order to win a laugh from the parquet, which did not know what it was to blush at an obscene word or a bit of licentious pantomime. It was thus, in a bygone time, that actors had recited in open theater the *Sermon joyeux d'un despucelleur de nourrices*, the *Sermon des frappe-culs*, and many other monologues in verse and prose, not any the less merry nor any the less filthy. In the time of Henri IV, Bruscombille had become known for his facetious harangues, which he addressed to the spectators before or after the comedy, harangues which had to do with all sorts of weird subjects, amusing or ridiculous; sometimes, as in the trial of the louse and the crab-louse, he would imitate the formalities of the Palais and the pedantical eloquence of the bar; sometimes, in the form of a panegyric in favor of big noses, he would indulge in the following macaronic-Latin punning paraphrase: *Ad formam nasi cognoscitur ad te levavi*;*sometimes, he would take upon himself the task of discovering, under a woman's petticoats, mysteries having to do with the leaping of fleas; sometimes he would pretend to have made a trip to Heaven and to Hell for the purpose of interrogating the spirits of the dead upon this vastly important question: *Uter vir an mulier se magis delectet in copulatione*.** There was a sufficient knowledge of Latin in the house to facilitate an understanding of Bruscombille's jargon; and the audience would laugh until they cried, even when they did not understand, for his pantomime was more eloquent than words. Sometimes, Deslauriers would treat pleasantly of serious matters, which were less pleasing to the habitués of the Hôtel de Bourgogne; his frequent theme was an apology for the theater and a justification of the comedian, whom it was his ambition to rescue from the infamy into which his profession had sunk him. But he was speedily obliged to resume his smut and to keep to his trade. The Marquis of Roure has cited, in his *Analecta Biblion* (Volume II, page 152 and following), a few of the obscene proverbs, fantasies and impudent paradoxes which Deslauriers recited and acted out upon the stage. We shall send the reader, who desires to know more of this subject, to the *Nouvelles et Plaisantes Imaginations de Bruscombille*, which the author does not hesitate to dedicate to Monseigneur le Prince, that is to say, to Henri de Bourbon, Prince of Condé!

*Translator's Note:—"By the shape of his nose ye shall know him" and "Unto thee I lift up (mine eyes)", a combination of a popular proverb and the beginning of a psalm (*Psalms*, CXXIII., 7). Cf. Rabelais' Friar John (Book I., end of Chapter XL.).

**Translator's Note:—"Whether man or woman takes more pleasure in copulation."

And all this was printed and reprinted with the permission of the King! And all this was played and mimed not only in the theater of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, but also in all the theaters of the province (*de campagne*), which borrowed Bruscambille's repertory! It might not have been so bad, if the public which came to listen to this filth, had been composed of drunkards and libertines, of vagabonds and prostitutes; but the middle-class citizen brought to the comedy his wife and daughter; the young folk were even more passionately fond than their elders of this divertisement which excited them to debauchery; and everywhere, the theater led to light loves and adulteries, to deceived husbands, to unfaithful wives, to procuresses of Prostitution and the doctrines of immorality. It was thus that the people became corrupt through evil counsels and bad examples. But if they had not gone to see the comedians of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, those of the Hôtel d'Argent, or those of the Theatre du Marais, or those of the fair of Saint-Germain, or those who erected their transient stages in all the tennis-courts, they might have had, as a divertisement to degrade their thoughts and instruct them in the lessons of immorality, the hideous parades in the Place Dauphine or on the Pont-Neuf; they might there have listened every day, without unloosening their purse strings, to the *recontres*, *questions*, *demandes*, *fantaisies*, etc., of the great Tabarin and the Baron of Gratelard, who dispensed their drugs, their perfumes, their ointments and their "secrets" by the aid of just such "admirable gaieties," "unheard-of conceptions" and "jovial farces," farces which were reprinted as many times as was necessary to satisfy the demand of purchasers who were not to be frightened away by impertinence of subject, boldness of detail or unseemliness of language. Tabarin and his rivals had the right to say anything that came into their heads upon the trestles; their audience had the right to hear everything, and if there happened to be among those present any commissioner of police of grave and austere mien, he was careful not to interrupt the pleasures of the lower classes by imposing silence upon the brazen actors of those *farces tabariniques*, which were later prohibited by decree of Parliament.

CONCLUSION

We have at last arrived at the end of our labors. We regret the fact that, in view of the small number of volumes which we have at our disposal, we have not been able to make use of any amount of precious material which would considerably have augmented the proportions of this book. Thus, it has been necessary to abbreviate the entire portion devoted to ancient times and having to do with the history of morals and Rome and the later Empire; we have, for example, omitted the two famous passages which have been suppressed in the old editions of Procopius (see the *Menagiana*, edition of 1715, Volume I, pages 347 and following, these two passages being established later by the manuscripts of the Vatican); but on the other hand, we congratulate ourselves upon what we have accomplished in the way of researches in the history of morals in France, from barbaric times down to the reign of Henri IV, where our work must stop. The fact should not be lost from sight that this is the first work which has been undertaken on a subject which is of no less interest to the moralist and the philosopher than it is to the legislator and the archæologist. The very leisureliness with which this important labor has been conducted bears witness to the fact that the author did not desire to owe the success of so serious a work to the impatient curiosity of frivolous readers.

We believe that we have proved, in the course of this vast historic compilation, that the ancient philosophies and religions were the more or less blameworthy auxiliaries of Prostitution; that a true morality for decent folk did not exist before the establishment of Christianity; that the principal rôle of this regenerative religion, in the midst of a pagan and idolatrous world, was, above all, to found a cult of morals, and that morals, upon becoming purified in the bosom of the Christian family, have created modern civilization. We have studied with impartiality the terrible and secret disorders induced by Prostitution in the heart of society. We have shown that, in all ages, this hideous vice has occurred in the face of human and divine laws, which have endeavored to stifle it, but which have been able merely to weaken and enchain it; finally, we have, with care, indicated the various and multiple forms which depravity has assumed in each

period, under the influence of general events and the special influences which have been brought to bear upon public morality.

Our resulting conviction, supported by an extended series of facts, is to the effect that legal Prostitution, that is to say, rather, Prostitution tolerated by law, has never had even indirect relations with the permanent state of morals of the country, and that it has remained always confined within a limited circle, which has never been widened save by an increase in population; but that, on the contrary, immorality in its most dangerous and the most insistent form, which has nothing in common with this variety of Prostitution, may still be developed in a terrifying manner among the upper classes, and grow there, so to speak, like a gangrene in the heart of the nation, if the government and the men who represent it do not labor to counteract the emulation of vicious habits on the part of our youth, but close their eyes to the worst form of Prostitution, namely, to that ferocious and insatiable love of money which is devouring the present generation.

From our hermitage of Saint-Claude, the 1st of January, 1854.

PIERRE DUFOUR

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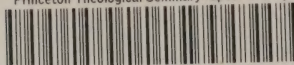
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